This month's full ballet guide

Dance and Dancers

JUNE 1956

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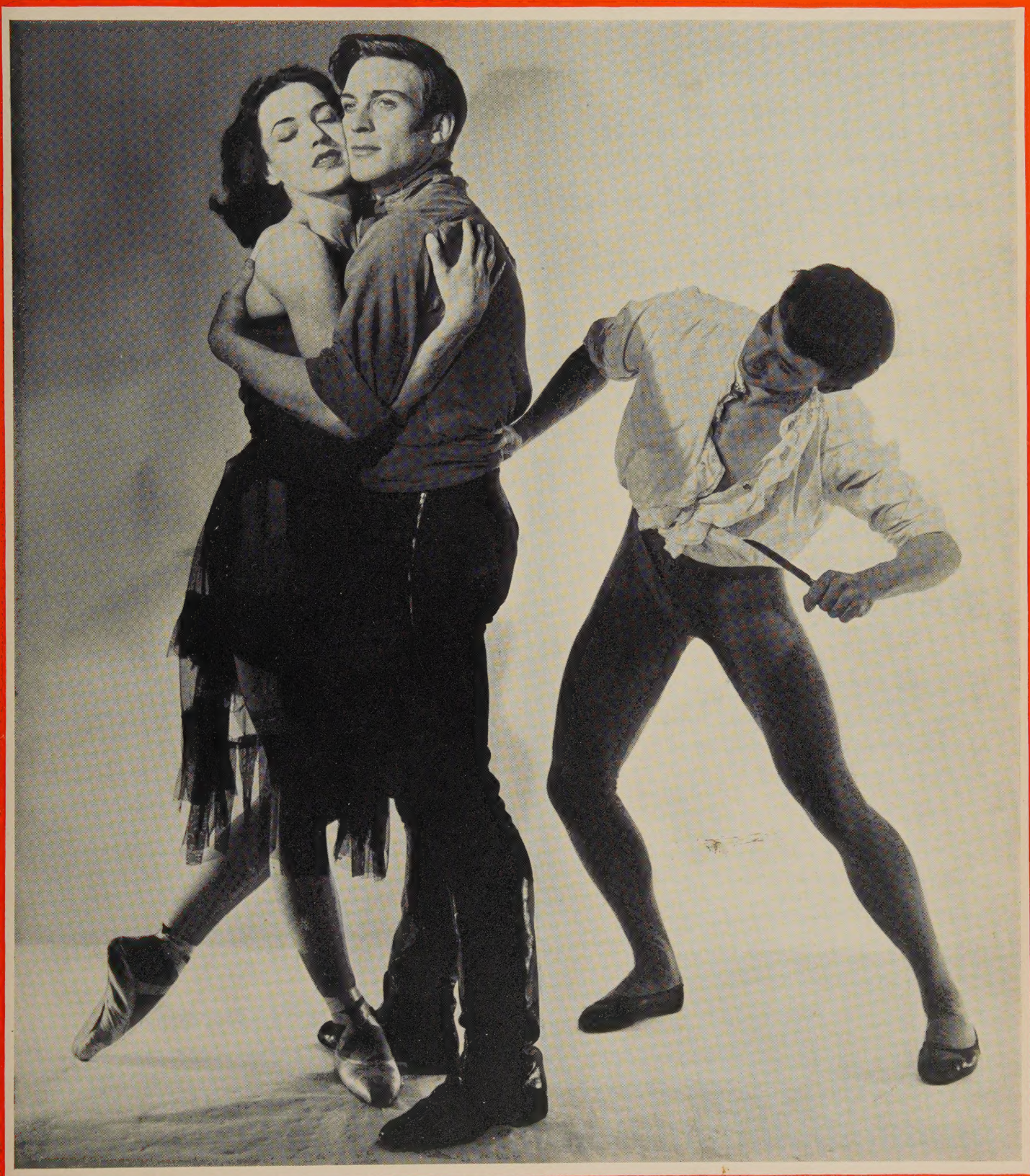

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Personality of the month

As the Firebird *Photo: Houston Rogers*

Violetta Elvin

IT is always sad when a ballerina retires; when a ballerina leaves the stage at the height of her powers the sense of loss is even greater. The announcement by Covent Garden in May that Violetta Elvin is to marry Ferdinando Savarese, an Italian lawyer, and to make her home in Naples means that after this season Sadler's Wells Ballet will lose one of its most gifted ballerinas. Elvin's beauty and personal charm have endeared her to a wide public and her name will be greatly missed from the Company's programmes.

Elvin was trained in Soviet Russia, finishing her schooling at the Bolshoi Theatre School, Moscow, just as Germany attacked Russia. Owing to the war she made her debut in Tashkent, where she danced, among other roles, Odette-Odile. When she was recalled to the Bolshoi company she was immediately appointed a soloist, without passing through the *corps de ballet*. As readers of Iris Morley's well-known book *Soviet Ballet* will remember, Elvin was at this time regarded as one of the most promising dancers in Russia. In 1944 she married a British Embassy official, and they came to England at the end of 1945. On February 21, 1946, the night after Covent Garden re-opened, she made her first appearance with the Sadler's Wells Ballet, dancing in the *Bluebird Pas de Deux* with Harold Turner. She has remained with Sadler's Wells ever since, first as a senior soloist and later as a ballerina.

Like most Russian dancers Elvin has developed comparatively slowly, but she is now among the most distinguished of Western ballerinas. She has danced all the classical ballets in the British repertory, with the exception of *Coppelia*, and her interpretations of Odette-Odile and Giselle have been widely and justly acclaimed. This season, during which she has made an interesting debut in the title role of *The Firebird*, her dancing has been more consistent than in the past, and her new partnership with David Blair has been highly successful. In the ten years she has been with the company Elvin has made a distinctive contribution to its history.

June 1956 Vol. 7 No. 6

Dance and Dancers

Editor: PETER WILLIAMS

Assistant Editor: CLIVE A. BARNES

WORLD'S LARGEST NET SALE IN THE FIELD

Second Russian Invasion

EVER since it was announced that the Bolshoi Ballet might be coming to Covent Garden in the early autumn, the box-office there has been besieged by people demanding to book tickets for the "Russians." Many of these people do not even know what Russians they are going to see; but nowadays the arrival of anything from the Soviet Union—even baby bears—sends people into a state of frenzy.

It has just been announced that the Bolshoi from Moscow, headed by Galina Ulanova, Maya Pliffetskaya and Raiffa Struchkova, will open a three and a half week season at Covent Garden on October 3. They will bring four full-length ballets —*Swan Lake*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Fountain of Bakhchisaray* and *Giselle*. Without in any way wishing to dampen anybody's enthusiasm, I suggest that the time has come to do a little clear thinking about what all this means.

Firstly, we must realise that the company we will see will not in any way, apart from the tradition of schooling, resemble that first great Russian ballet invasion of Western Europe under the command of Serge Diaghilev. Many people seem to be under the impression that it will; they are wrong. We shall in fact be seeing something of the kind of national ballet against which Diaghilev and his followers rebelled. All that we have seen in films leads us to expect massive productions in what to us may not be very good taste from a designing point of view, productions presented with a tremendous amount of gusto, which even at their worst moments will have a dramatic integrity that will make them seem plausible.

According to present Western standards, I do not think that the company's contemporary choreography will impress us very much. They seem to have no one of the status of Fokine, Massine or Balanchine; though we do not know what they may have up their sleeve. But what we have seen in films and concert performances has been choreographically unexciting and sometimes even banal.

On the other hand I feel certain that the dancers will come as a revelation. Everything I have ever seen of Ulanova convinces me that she is a magnificent artist, and at least several of her sister ballerinas will, no doubt, knock us for six. They will possibly not have the classical purity of Olga Spessivtzeva nor the aristocratic artistry and range of Tamara Karsavina, but there is not the slightest doubt that the grand manner that we associate with Russian Ballet will be much in evidence. From the male dancers we know that we can expect wonderful character work, stalwart partnering and remarkable elevation. There will, of course, be many other things that will influence us and give us pleasure. But do not let us be caught up in hysterical anticipation which may easily turn to hysterical disappointment if we are unprepared for what we shall see.

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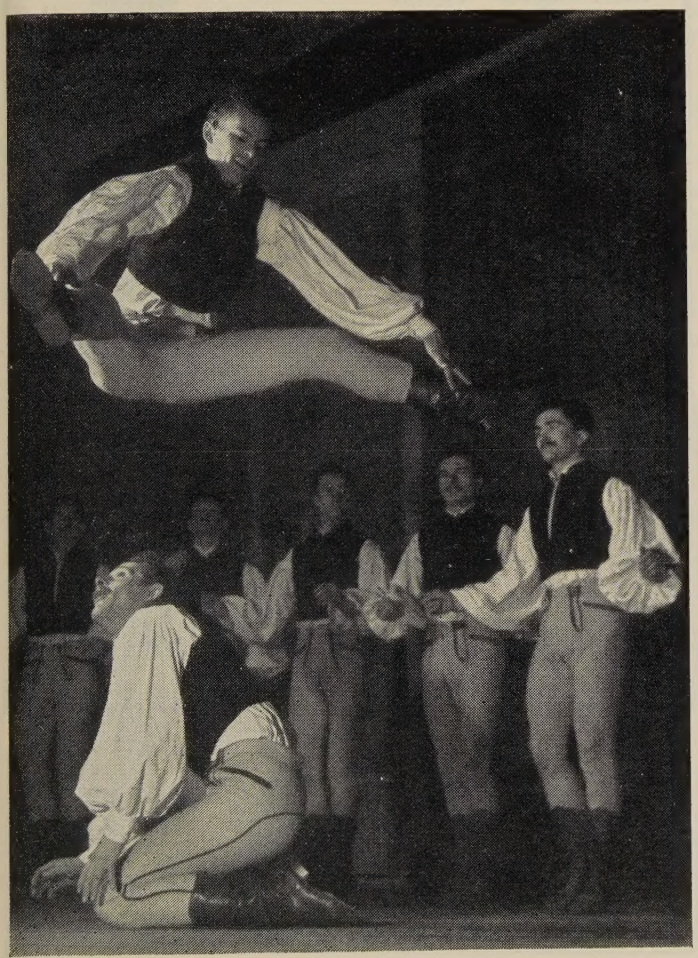

GYPSY DANCES OF HUNGARY: *The girls of the company in a typical gypsy dance the costumes for which are very colourful.*

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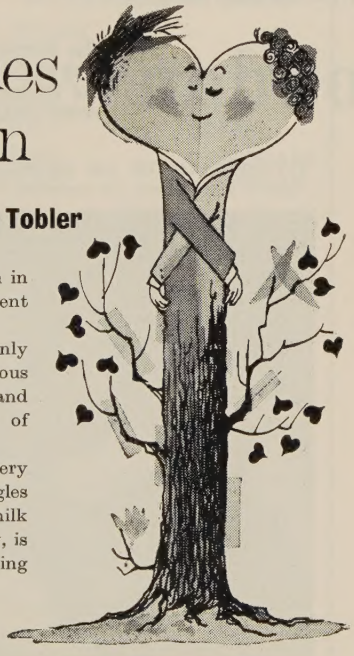

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THE DANCERS ARRIVE: Festival Ballet arriving at Nice Airport to take part in the gala season at Monte Carlo. Geoffrey Corbett (musical director) on the left, Benn Toff (stage director) on the right. Photo: Jeffrey Kovel

THE PRINCIPAL PLAYERS: Prince Rainier with Grace Kelly at the Casino Cabaret shortly after she arrived in Monaco. Photo: Leon Ward

Dancing at the Wedding

Dancers from several countries combined to make ballet the chief entertainment during the celebrations attendant on the wedding of Prince Rainier and film star Grace Kelly in Monaco on April 17. Here is the story of five hectic days of dancing.

by Peter Williams

I DO not know whether those responsible for arranging the entertainment for the wedding of Prince Rainier of Monaco to Grace Kelly knew anything about ballet history, but if they did they must have realised that dancing fêtes have played an important part in royal European marriage celebrations from as far back at 1489. In fact ballet first approximated to the form in which we now know it in that year, when Galeazzo, Duke of Milan, married Isabella of Aragon.

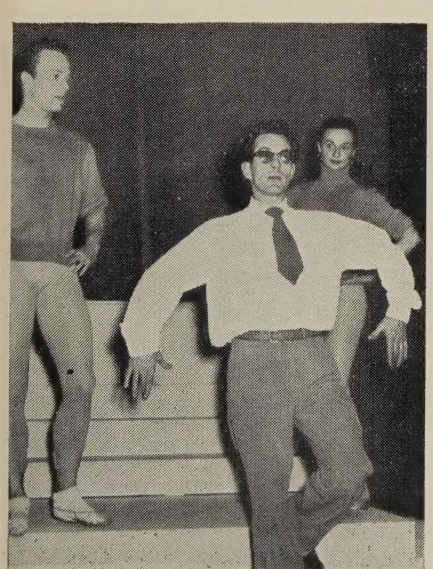
This remarkable dinner-ballet arranged by Bergonzio di Botta took place in Tortona and each course in a very lengthy feast was served up to the accompaniment of elaborate and spectacular dances and songs which were mainly connected with mythological deities. This entertainment set a fashion for the royal and ducal courts throughout Europe, reaching a new peak when the Duc de Joyeuse married Marguérite of Lorraine in 1581 with Beaujoyeux's *Ballet Comique de la Reine*. The history of ballet is punctuated through the centuries with many such nuptial festivities.

Bearing all this in mind, I set off for Monaco, at the invitation of the Société de Bain de Mer, on April 15. As my plane shot up through the clouds overhanging London Airport, piercing them until we reached the upper air where all was blue sky and hot sun, I thought to myself that even if the festivities ahead did not prove to be another turning-point in ballet history they would at least add a notable page to the ballet history of 1956. I was not wrong.

The opening phases of this journey were hardly auspicious. In Nice it was raining and the taxi driver who rapidly conveyed me from Nice to Monte Carlo along the lowest Corniche road (perhaps he thought I had had enough of heights for one day) was more interested in the weather affecting the visitors to Nice than anything that might be going on in Monaco. "There," he informed me with expressive disdain, "is nothing but les Anglais and les Americains." I hastily changed the subject.

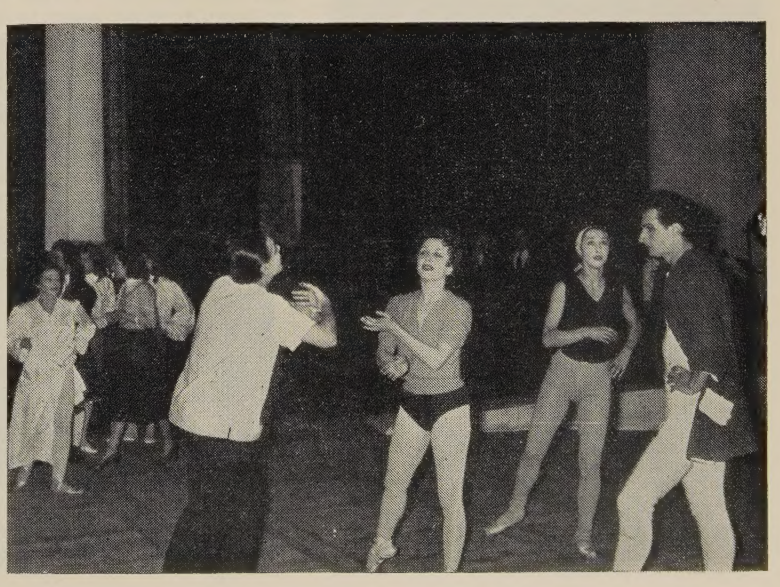
As we approached Monte Carlo I saw what he meant. Everywhere were vast American cars (English cars were noticeably absent). Outside the International Sporting Club, Serge Lifar and Jean Cocteau seemed to be engaged in some violent altercation with officials. Then I knew I was back in Monte Carlo.

To say that the preliminary stages of the dance arrangements for the wedding were not fraught with intrigue, rising tempers and general muddle, would be quite untrue. But most undertakings suffer from such things—even local flower shows. It was reported that one director had ordered another out of a

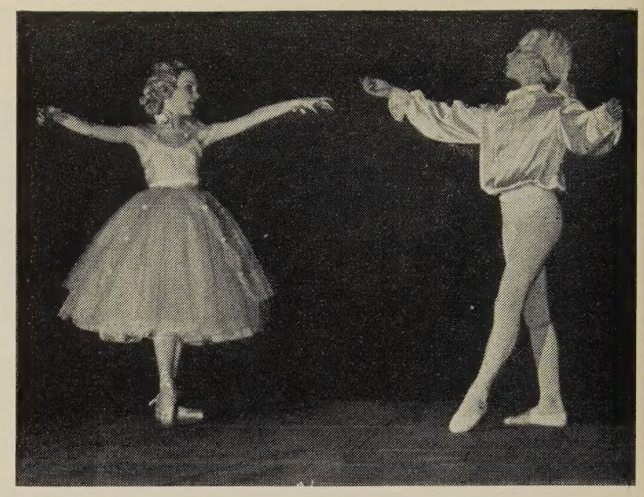


TWO TEAMS PREPARE: (left) Michael Charnley rehearsing John Gilpin and Anita Landa for Hommage à la Princesse. *Right: Serge Lifar rehearses Amiel, Vyroubova and Renault in* Divertissement à la Cour. *Chauviré in background on left.*

Photos: Jeffrey Kovel



BALLERINA IN THE GAMING ROOMS: Tamara Toumanova (centre) with friends, in the Sporting Club after her performance in Fanfares pour le Prince. *Photo: Oggero*



YOUNG SERENADERS: Laure Vatrican and Alain Dubreuil dance a Mozart Minuet in the Serenade performance. Photo: Maestri

rehearsal. It was said that one ballerina was furious because another ballerina was dancing in more ballets than she was. It was said that the programmes had been arranged to the advantage of one country more than another. It was said—but why go on? None of the rumours flying around were true in any case.

The two main countries—France in the shape of the Paris Opéra Ballet, and England in the shape of Margot Fonteyn, Michael Somes and London's Festival Ballet—were in Monte Carlo to provide the main bulk of the entertainment at the wedding, and each was determined to give of their best. Even if there were slight differences of opinion, the overriding factor was that each country was intent on providing a spectacle worthy of a Prince and his new Princess.

The night of my arrival was the one set aside for the rehearsal of the Serenade to be given two nights later in the courtyard in front of the Palace. At the appointed time, Dolin and I drove to the Palace to find the courtyard more suited to an Esther Williams Aquacade. The Serenade would eventually have to go on, provided the weather gave permission, without a rehearsal.

Ballet after breakfast

10.30 in the morning is no time to see a full performance of ballet, even less so is it a time to dance it. At this hour on April 16, the Press of the world gathered gloomily together to witness the *répétition générale* of the gala performance to be given at the Théâtre de Monte-Carlo on the night of the civil marriage. The only factors missing from this performance were Fonteyn and Somes (not yet arrived from Finland), the Prince and Princess, and the promised brilliant audience.

The Paris Opéra started the ball rolling with Lifar's *Divertissement à la Cour* (reviewed in full on page 14), the gentle nature of which did little to rouse the world Press from its early-morning state. In fact many of the audience seemed uncertain as to whether it was "quite the thing" to applaud at all.

This was followed by Festival Ballet in Harald Lander's *Etudes*, and this time, in spite of itself, the world Press let itself go in gales of cheering as Toni Lander, John Gilpin, Flemming Flindt and Festival Ballet gave item after item of this exciting work with a verve I have not seen before. So good were they, and Toni Lander in particular, that they became the general topic of conversation for the next few days even when the nuptial celebrations were in full swing.

Thoroughly thawed out, the world Press paid due respect to *Pas de Quatre* from Lifar's *Variations*, beautifully danced by Yvette Chauviré, Nina Vyroubova, Madeleine Lafon and Josette Amiel. Although I cannot always agree with Lifar's use of the Schubert music, there is no doubt that he has devised a splendid show-piece for his leading *étoiles*. In this case, each variation seemed to suit the particular technical qualities of the artist in question. Having seen this work when the Opéra Ballet appeared in London, I knew what to expect from the first three dancers but the surprise was the new maturity of Amiel, in whom I feel the Opéra have a potential important star.

This pre-luncheon performance ended with a dress rehearsal of Michael Charnley's *Hommage á la Princesse* (reviewed on page 17), which the world Press also received with enthusiasm.

Tea, later that day, with Tamara Toumanova and her "Mama" gave me the opportunity of observing that the beauty of Tamara has not dimmed with the years any more than has the ebullience of Mama. As she graphically described to me Tamara's performance in the *Dance of the Seven Veils* from *Salome* in Milan I understood her to say Tamara wears 70 kilometres of veiling in the ballet. Afterwards I learn that she really means metres. *Fanfares pour le Prince*, in which Toumanova appeared at the International Sporting Club is reviewed on page 12.

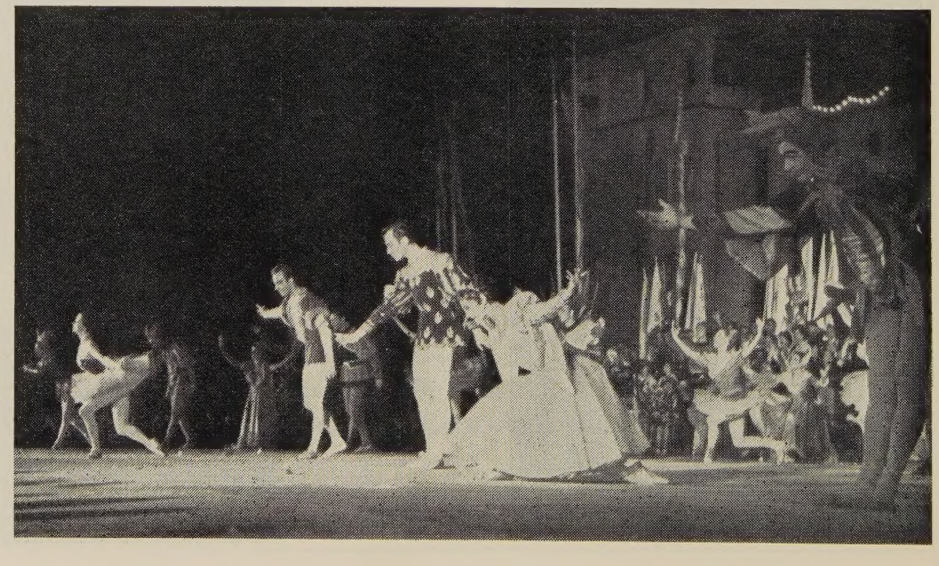
Serenade and fireworks

The weather, paying deference to the royal occasion, decided to clear up for the Serenade on April 17. I was reminded of the days when

DOLIN INSTRUCTS: As there was no rehearsal for the Serenade, Dolin shows the dancers the position of the Prince's balcony to which they must bow.

OPEN-AIR ESMERALDA: Burr, Gilpin, Melville and Wright bowing to the Prince after their performance in La Esmeralda *for the Serenade in the courtyard before the Palace.*

Photos: Leon Ward



GALA PERFORMANCE: A view of the Royal Box, with Prince Rainier and the new Princess Patricia Grace, during an interval at the gala in the Théâtre de Monte-Carlo.

OPERA STARS: Vyroubova, Chauviré, Lafon, Amiel taking a call after dancing in Lifar's Variations.

Photos: Jeffrey Kovel

I played cricket, of the mixture of hope and dread which accompanied the rainy morning hours before an important afternoon match. By the evening there was no doubt that for the time, at any rate, the rain has passed on somewhere else. In a convoy of special buses we set out for the Palace.

A vast stage had been erected in the square facing the Palace, the only scenery being canvas screens decorated by American and Monagasque flags, shields and crowns. The surrounding medieval houses gave the performance the air of a morality play. The night was far from warm, and the Prince and his intended bride and their guests were late appearing on the balcony; the waiting crowd started to get rather restive. Forty minutes after the scheduled time, the lights went up on the Palace, the Prince's party appeared in the lighted windows and groups of local inhabitants in pretty Monagasque costumes sang folk-songs and performed folk-dances of the region, accompanied on rather strange looking local instruments. This went on rather too long, and the fact that carnations were being liberally scattered on the stage made one fear for the ballet dancers later.

The ballet section of the Serenade led off with pupils of Suan Dubreuil's École de Danse Classique de Monte Carlo, where Princess Antoinette's children study dancing. Laure Vatrican and Alain Dubreuil were enchanting in the *Minuet* from a Mozart *Divertimento*, which they gave with great style and remarkable presence; these two tiny figures alone in what seemed almost interminable space were most touching. They were followed by three of the tiniest dancers I have ever seen, bobbing around, like sylphide dolls on elastic, to Chopin music.

Festival Ballet in a divertissement from the second act of *La Esmeralda* made up the finale. The costumes which I have never liked in the theatre seemed to fit in perfectly with these surroundings. In spite of the carnation-strewn stage and the, by that time, excessive cold, the principals (Wright, Melville, Burr and Gilpin) gave a splendid account of themselves. Gilpin and Burr in the *grand pas de deux* brought cheers from the Palace which were echoed round the walls of the old town. The ceremony finished with those taking part laying bouquets and baskets of flowers to form a carpet on the ground below the Prince's balcony. The walk down from the rock (the dense crowds made transport impossible) was lit up all the way by a magnificent display of fireworks—great bouquets of light filled the harbour for about half an hour. Fonteyn told me later that from Onassis' yacht, where she and Michael Somes were staying, the effect was terrifying as they were right in the middle of the fireworks.

Televised gala

THE gala at the Théâtre de Monte-Carlo, on the night of the wedding, was the first opportunity I had of seeing the new Princess Grace Patricia of Monaco at fairly close quarters. No film or photograph really does full justice to her solemn beauty. The audience would, I suppose, be called brilliant, they were certainly well dressed. In the foyer everyone kept a weather-eye on the remainder of the audience and on the television cameras into whose line of vision they unobtrusively tried to stray. The Aga Khan and his beautiful and charming Begum held court; Ava Gardner was the most simply and best dressed.

The same ballets that the press were shown two days previously were on the whole enthusiastically received; lights blazed in the theatre and TV cameras whirred the whole time. Fonteyn and Somes danced the *Aurora pas de deux* with their usual artistry. The principal dancers were all sent bouquets by the Prince. As most of the world saw the gala on their television screens, there remains little to say except that without colour it must have been impossible to realise exactly how brilliant it all was. There was no doubt that ballet had proved to be a most happy accompaniment to the whole wedding.

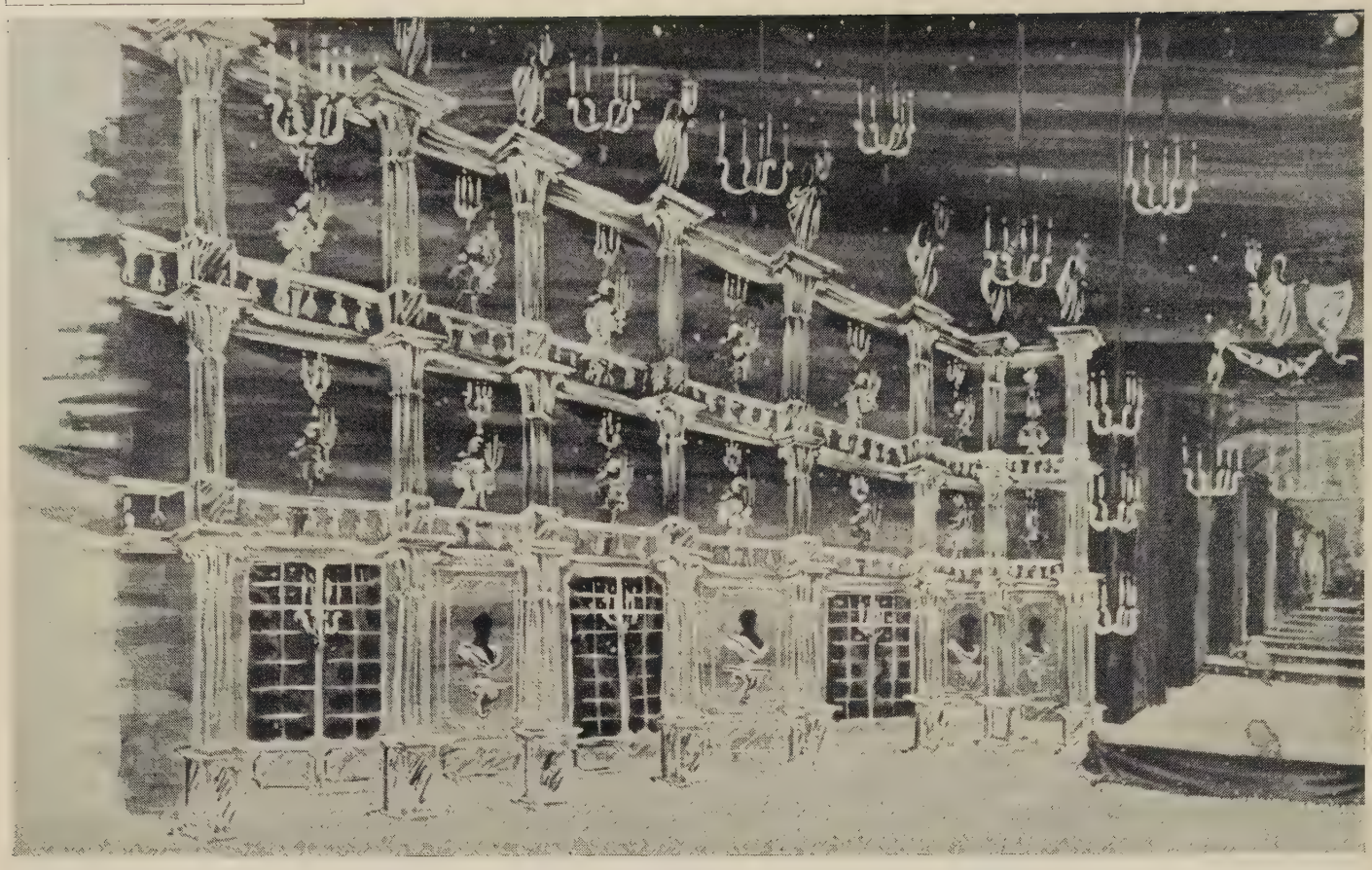
Repetition in stadium

TRADITIONALLY after any gala at the Théâtre de Monte-Carlo, the people of Monaco have a chance of seeing the performance on the following night in the Stade Louis II sports stadium. The stage was laid flat on the grass in the middle of a huge arena in the open air. "I wonder how Dame Margot will like dancing in this?" muttered a voice in the dark as we huddled together for warmth. Dame Margot was in high spirits about it all; she took a look at the stage, giggled, and declared that "it will all be a lot of fun." Somebody had forgotten to order a piano.

The Paris Opéra started with their *Divertissement à la Cour*, and were followed by Festival Ballet in *Hommage à la Princesse*. Neither looked too happy, but as alfresco ballet is never entirely satisfactory and as a glacial wind blew straight across the stadium, it was amazing that they could give any kind of performance at all. Fonteyn and Somes gave a magnificent *Aurora pas de deux*, and such applause thundered out from the thousands in the grandstand that everyone forgot the arctic conditions. The programme finished lustily with Festival Ballet giving the *Prince Igor* dances against large tents and with the addition of the choir of Monte Carlo Opéra, clouds of coloured smoke and fireworks. Horses were promised but, alas, never materialised.

The wedding dancing was over, and overnight Monte Carlo returned to its former self: the deposed royalty came out of hiding, wealthy dowagers again waddled with their dogs in streets no longer blocked by oversize American cars. The world Press dissolved as though it had never existed, and again it was possible to find a chair in the foyer of the Hôtel de Paris where previously it had been a struggle even to cross it. The party was over but there would always remain with those who had been present the memory of several days of splendid ballet.

NEW ENVIRONMENT FOR FONTEYN: Anton Dolin, Margot Fonteyn and André Lavasseur on the stage of the Stade Louis II before the open-air performance in which Fonteyn and Somes danced the Aurora pas de deux. *Photo: Kovel*



Fanfares pour le Prince

First given at the International Sporting Club, Monte Carlo, at a gala dinner entitled *Fête de Nuit* in honour of Prince Rainier of Monaco and Miss Grace Kelly on April 15, 1956.

Choreography and production by John Taras. Prologue written by Jean Cocteau. Argument and designs by André Lavasseur. Music: Suite de Ballet after composers of the 17th century chosen by Pierre Gendre and orchestrated by Fred Kiriloff.

	CAST
Princesse de la Nuit	TAMARA TOUMANOVA
Prince de la Lumière	WLADIMIR OUKHTOMSKY
La Lumière	JOSETTE CLAVIER
L'Ombre	JEAN PIERRE ALBAN
Le Messager de la Nuit	BERNARD HALL
La Reine de la Nuit	JACQUELINE CHAMBORD
Les Dames de la Nuit	Shirley Scott, Valerie Pitkin, Natacha Tarova, Norma Arnould, Diana Daubeny, Christiane Puward
Le Ballet des Fleurs	Pamela Davis, Lill Knudsen, Scarlet O'Neil, Gillian Vaughan, Francine Hansen, Janet Gray
Les Gardiens de la Lumière	Yves, Casati, Jean Chauvelin, Georges Froscher, Michel Lauret

THERE was an extravagance about the *Fête de Nuit* at the International Sporting Club that bore little relation to marriage celebrations of today. It seemed to me right that in a place like Monte Carlo where thousands of pounds are won and lost every day, where the atmosphere never seems quite real, where in spite of modern cars and yachts it never seems as though the principality belongs to this century at all, that several thousand pounds should have been spent on this gala in honour of the wedding of Prince Ranier to his film star bride. It is the kind of extravagance that I admire enormously.

I like to think of elaborate masques created in the excitement and spirit of the moment, then discarded. Such spectacles become legendary; when they are retained and given when the occasion for which they were created has passed, then they just become rather shoddy bores. The Sporting d'Hiver in Monte Carlo is not the world's most attractive building, either outside or in. It was built in 1922, in what we now think to be an unattractive and uninspired architectural period. This very factor makes it possible to transform it completely inside for any fête, as nobody complains about its architectural qualities being obscured. André Lavasseur's transformation of the interior of this building played a very important part in the success of the *Fête de Nuit*.

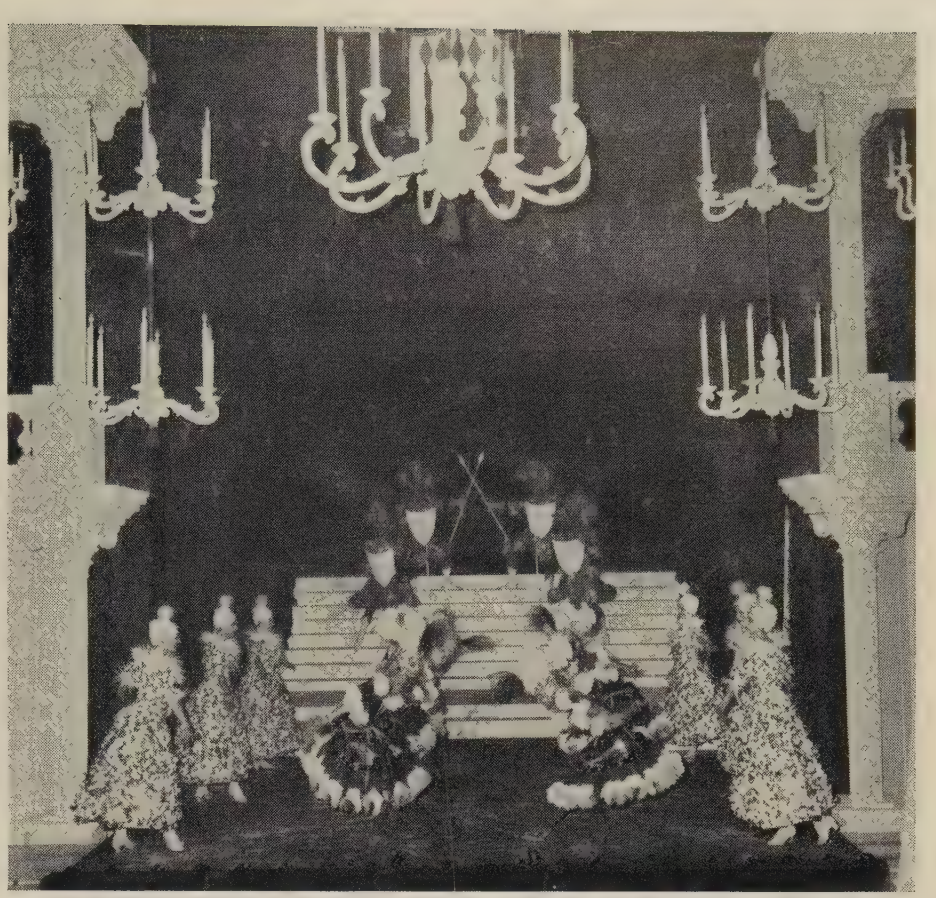
The effect was a 17th century alfresco masque at Versailles. Tier upon tier of white marble pillars rose up to the night sky. White busts in the lower alcoves had ebony faces, in the upper balconies attendants dressed in coats of Monagasque red stood eternally immobile holding many-branched white candlesticks. From the deep blue star-sprinkled

PALATIAL TRANSFORMATION (left): The design by André Lavasseur for the main hall of the International Sporting Club in Monte Carlo for Nuit de Fête, *in honour of Prince Rainier's wedding. The design shows the stage on which the masque*—Fanfares pour le Prince—*was given, as if seen from the Royal box.*

ENTRY OF NIGHT (bottom left): Tamara Toumanova as the Princesse de la Nuit in her variation after her first entrance. Her attendants, Les Dames de la Nuit, are seen in the background.

ENSEMBLE (right): In the background are the four Guardians of Light dressed in orange and gold. The Ladies of the Night are centre in blue and purple velvet, be-plumed and star sprinkled. The six Flowers are on each side in costumes covered with myriads of little flowers in many colours. The picture gives an idea of the small stage, upon which it cannot have been easy to dance. Photos: Oggero

NIGHT MEETS LIGHT (bottom right): The final pas de deux *for Toumanova and Wladimir Oukhtomsky, when the Prince of Light takes the Princess of Night to his palace. In the background, on the left, is Madeline Chambord who recited Cocteau's prologue.*



sky were suspended many more white candelabra. Through the white French windows could be seen avenues of Le Nôtre topiary. More arches of green topiary punctuated the length of this magic palace of air which achieved greater perspective by being repeated on the stage. The rich red-draped royal box, where the Prince's party sat, formed a grandstand. From it the effect was as if looking down one of the long avenues from the Palace of Versailles to the lake.

The form of the ballet was very similar to a 17th-century allegorical masque. Jacqueline Chambord, representing the Mediterranean, addressed the Prince in a Prologue written by Jean Cocteau. Unfortunately the beautiful prose of Cocteau is completely untranslateable into English. Assuming human form, the Mediterranean tells how a certain blonde maiden strangely resembles her daughter Aphrodite, and how the Atlantic has entrusted her to bring this young person to the port of Monte Carlo on her shoulders. She describes how, a long time ago, in a night shining with stars, a Prince of Light came to choose a star to take back and consecrate in the Temple of the Sun and of Flowers. This last sentence forms the theme of the dance scenes to follow.

The prologue was beautifully delivered by Chambord (who is attached to the Paris Opéra for all the declamatory roles) in a magnificent panniered dress of deep blue and purple glistening with stars. She then moved back for the entrance of the Messenger of Night with attendant ladies dressed in shorter costumes of a similar colour. This was followed by a short variation for the Shadow, making way for the entrance of the Princess of Night, the "star" of Cocteau's prologue. In a white tutu decorated with white plumes and glittering stars, Toumanova descended the staircase and danced a short variation. On came the four Guardians of Light, followed by the *entrée* of Flowers heralding the coming of Light (Clavier). At the end of her dance the Prince of Light came to claim the Princess of Night in a *pas de deux*, and the masque ended in a milky way of stars flowing down the avenue and fireworks blazing in the sky, an original variation on the old custom of deities descending on a cloud machine for the apotheosis.

John Taras had, I thought, achieved a very happy combination of 17th century mannered style and 20th-century neo-classicism in his choreography, some of which reminded me of Balanchine's *The Gods Go a-begging* for the Diaghilev Ballet, though it is certain that this young American choreographer could never have seen that ballet. There was a nice balance of ensembles, variations and *pas de deux*. Taras very cleverly incorporated the Monte Carlo "Dancing Stars," from the cabaret, in this *corps de ballet* as flowers and ladies of the night.

Toumanova was as dazzling as the star she was supposed to represent. In her variation and *pas de deux*, well partnered by Oukhtomsky, she gave a marvellous exhibition of the grand manner. Possibly the most interesting choreography was for Clavier who as Light seemed to scintillate with the hard precise technique we have come to expect from the best French dancers. The very short variation for the Shadow was also well given by Jean Pierre Alban.

Possibly subjected to the grim concentration of an ordinary theatre audience, the ballet would not emerge as anything particularly significant, as an accompaniment to an excellent dinner and for such an occasion it made a most exciting theatrical experience. **P.W.**

REHEARSAL AT HOME: Principal dancers of the Paris Opéra photographed on the grand staircase of the Opéra prior to their departure for Monte Carlo for the wedding season. Serge Lifar (centre) Amiel, Chauviré, Vyroubova, Bari (seated), Michel Renault (in front). *Photo: Lido*

Divertissement à la Cour

First given by members of the Paris Opéra Ballet at the Théâtre de Monte-Carlo on April 18, 1956. Book by Constantine Nepo. Production and choreography by Serge Lifar. Music by Handel, arranged and orchestrated by Tony Aubin. Decor and costumes by Constantin Nepo.

CAST

Louis XIV	SERGE LIFAR
A Dancer	YVETTE CHAUVIRE
La Favorite	NINA VYROUBOVA
The Ballet Master	MICHEL RENAULT
Dancers	JOSETTE AMIEL, RAOUL BARI

Corps de ballet of artists of the Paris Opéra and of the Monte Carlo Opéra.

IN a grotto, in the Palace of Versailles, King Louis XIV appears and indicates that there is to be a masque performed. The dancers enter and start to rehearse. There are dances for a shy young dancer, a haughty favourite and for the ballet master, together with ensembles and variations for other soloists.

Confusion reigns when the King is seen approaching from the distance. Louis XIV enters dressed as the Sun King and the performance of the masque begins.

CHOREOGRAPHY

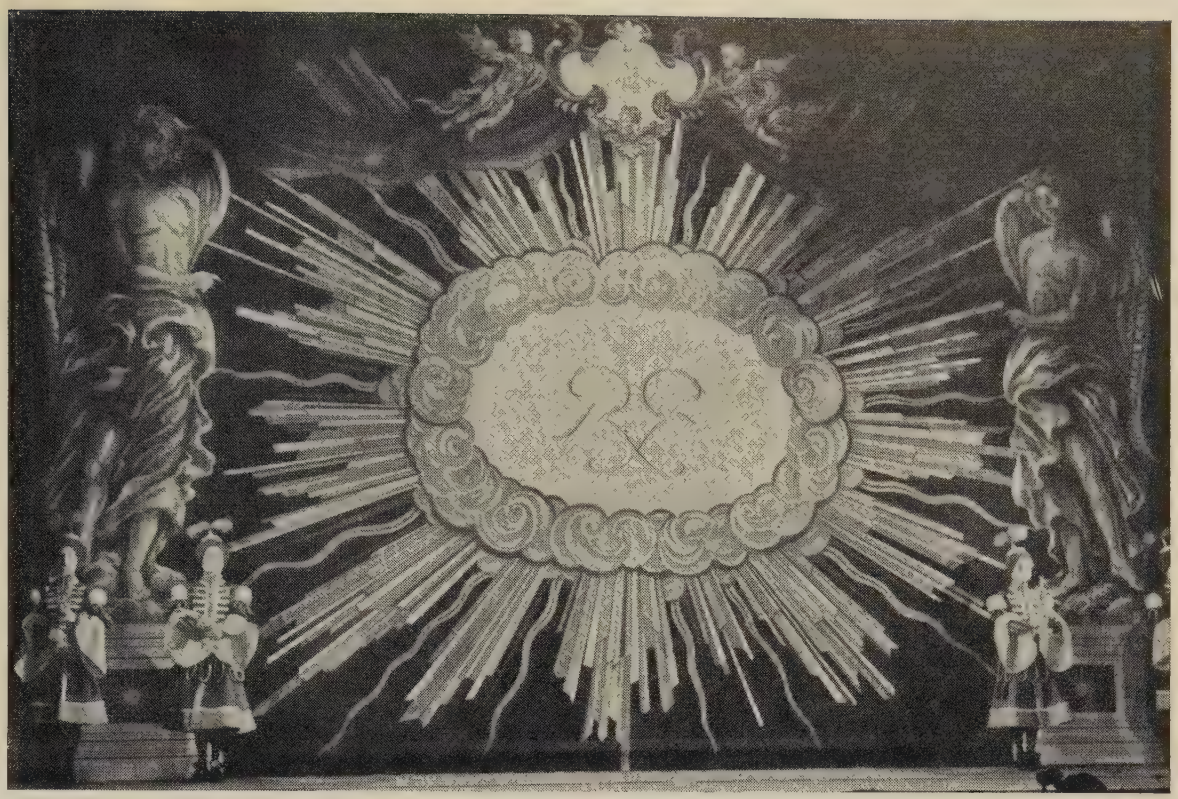
LIFAR's contribution to the Monte Carlo revels was similar in many ways to the Cocteau-Taras-Lavasseur spectacle at the Sporting Club two nights earlier. This was rather unfortunate as, in comparison, it did not show up so well. By that time the audience had rather had its fill of *Grand Siècle* masques.

Although Lifar, like Taras, had attempted a combination of period style and neo-classicism, it was not, on the whole, so successful. Movements such as the essentially 19th-century "fish dive" do not blend well with an evocation of an earlier period. To see, for instance, a 17th-century dancer, even if she is the favourite,

A KING STEPS OUT (left): Lifar, as Louis XIV, with Chauviré.

THE FAVOURITE FLIRTS (right): Vyroubova with Michel Renault.

Photos: Lido



SUNBURST: The effective front-curtain, designed by Constantine Nepo, as it appeared at the gala at the Théâtre de Monte-Carlo.

REGAL FETE (below): Lifar and Chauviré (centre) with Renault (back, centre) in a moment towards the end of Divertissement *à* la Cour.

Photos taken during the actual performance by Leon Ward

turned upside down by a ballet-master does not look quite right.

On the other hand, Lifar has so often imposed almost acrobatic choreography on early composers that much of the ballet seemed, for him, rather quiet and on only few occasions did he resort to anything verging on the spectacular. I also thought that he had realised the content of Handel's music (the *Water Music*) with far more regard than is often his practice.

Each of the variations implied, in their choreography, the character the dancer was supposed to portray: Chauviré has a rather muted solo, Vyroubova is rather brassy and ogling, Renault very virile.

The main fault with the work lay in its construction, which was nebulous. First there is an introductory prologue, followed by a rehearsal which never really gave the atmosphere of such. It appeared to be more like an actual performance in not very suitable clothes. However slight the theme is, I feel it is essential to give some feeling of environment. There should have been more sense of bustle, of rising temper or even of mishap, all of which are attendant on most rehearsals—something similar to Tudor's *Gala Performance*, but of another age. The actual performance, when it came, was over in a trice so that we were left with a feeling that we had been cheated of something. The leisurely pace of these loosely-strung-together dances created a rather soporific effect.

DANCING

AS was to be expected from so distinguished a cast, the dancing was excellent. It is always a pleasure to see artists such as Chauviré, Vyroubova and Renault. The grand eloquence that is the trademark of the best Opéra dancers was never lacking. Chauviré's tender portrayal, a fine-drawn period cameo, was possibly too restrained to create any great impact. Vyroubova came off better as her role and her music allowed her to give full rein to a more theatrical character. Renault had the most spectacular variation of which he made the utmost. Lifar, as the Sun King, danced a short measure with Chauviré and spent the rest of the time looking regal. The *corps de ballet* had little to do other than appear rather cramped on a small up-stage platform. The bones of the work remained an elaborate *pas de trois* which the flesh of the soloists and *corps de ballet* never quite covered.

DECOR

NEPO'S design for the drop-curtain, in front of which parade candelabra-bearing attendants with chalk white faces and brilliant scarlet and orange costumes, was most effective. It gave a feeling of splendour and opulence which was dissipated when it rose upon an almost monochrome vista of grey.

This main setting would, no doubt, have gained in effect on a stage with greater depth such as that of the Paris Opéra; the smaller Monte Carlo stage made it rather claustrophobic. It was rather hard to reconcile the richness of the opening moments with the delicate pastel colours of setting and costumes for the rehearsal part of the ballet. It is true that by the time we got to the actual performance in the finale, the dancers were attired in costumes of great richness, but the main bulk of the ballet had an aura of grey over it.

Again, one has to repeat that the designing had to enter into direct competition with the Sporting Club, as transformed by Lavasseur, and again one has to admit that Lavasseur won mainly because his palette was more limited and because his use of applied decoration was more theatrical than Nepo's. The silhouettes of Nepo's costumes for the girls, in the earlier part of the ballet looked more as though they belonged to the Romantic era. When they became more elaborate, in the later section, they were accurate as regards to period, but the distribution of colour was so fussy that the all-over effect was not as splendid as one felt it should be.

Removed from the competition from across the Casino gardens, the designing would be effective enough in the average ballet programme.

Peter Williams

Background to a Ballet

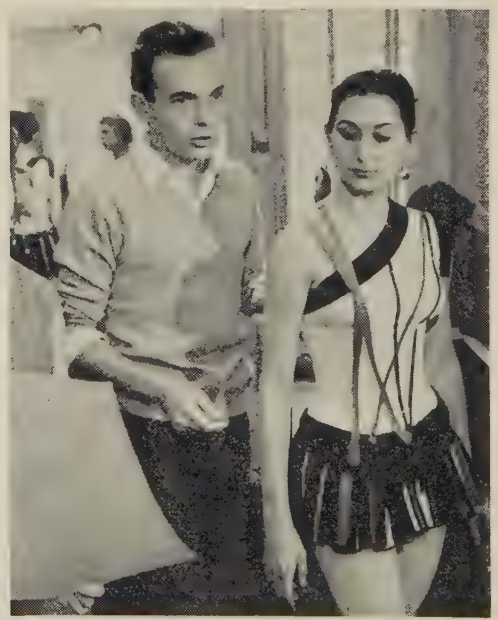
IN order to get a new ballet on in time for the wedding in Monaco, the directors of Festival Ballet had to work at tremendous speed. Once it was decided who should choreograph, compose and design *Homage to a Princess*, Stan Kenton had to be contacted in mid-Atlantic, Michael Charnley had to extricate himself temporarily from a musical show and André Lavasseur had to fly backwards and forwards between the company, Paris and Monte Carlo. With all the makers of the ballet scattered in various parts of the globe, communication became difficult. However, in the usual way of the theatre, they all came together eventually and the ballet was finished and "all right on the night."

MUSIC DISCUSSION: Stan Kenton (centre, with striped coat) talking to the company on the stage of the King's Theatre, Glasgow. Gilpin on the left, Dolin and Landa on the right. Photo: Leon Ward

CHOREOGRAPHIC DISCUSSION: Michael Charnley (centre) talking to Geoffrey Corbett, Festival Ballet's musical director, at an early rehearsal. Dolin is seen on the left. Photo: Jeffrey Kovel

DESIGN FOR THE HOMAGE: The sketch by Lavasseur for the setting: a throne, in Monagasque red, is silhouetted against a bright blue sky. Photo: Oggero

DESIGNS FOR DANCERS: Two costume designs by Lavasseur. On the left, the black costume for Gilpin with red and white decorations. On the right, a costume for four corps de ballet *girls, in the same scheme of colours, showing the interesting movement of the skirts. Photo: Oggero*



DESIGNING DISCUSSION: André Lavasseur at the fitting of Marilyn Burr's costume, in the workroom attached to the theatre in Monte Carlo, on the day of the first dress rehearsal. Photo: Oggero

THE BALLET OPENS: When the curtain goes up, the male dancers in red, black and white are grouped like statues. John Gilpin is alone on the throne. The well-painted sky gives a feeling of light and clear air. *Photo: Oggero*

Homage to a Princess

First given by London's Festival Ballet at the Théâtre de Monte-Carlo on April 18, 1956. Ballet in five movements by Michael Charnley on a theme by Anton Dolin. Music by Stan Kenton. Decor and costumes by André Lavasseur

Ballet dedicated to Princess Grace Patricia of Monaco.

CAST

1st Movement: BELINDA WRIGHT MARILYN BURR ANITA LANDA JOHN GILPIN
2nd Movement: MARILYN BURR LOUIS GODFREY RONALD EMBLEN
3rd Movement: BELINDA WRIGHT JOHN GILPIN
4th and 5th Movements: WRIGHT BURR LANDA GILPIN

with

Janet Overton, Pamela Hart, Wendy Burr, Mary Duchesne, Dawn Swan, Maureen Webster, Diane Westerman, Sheila Wright.

Louis Godfrey, Michael Hogan, Russell Kerr, Jeffrey Kovel, Maurice Metliss, David Scott, Geoffrey Davidson, Donald McAlpine, Alexis Gohar.

IT was necessary for Festival Ballet to create a new work for the wedding season in Monte Carlo. The question was what form such a work should take. So many of these ballets for special occasions become pointless after the occasion is forgotten, and Festival Ballet needed a work which could remain in its general repertoire. Youth should be the keynote of it all because the Prince and his new Princess are both young. It was therefore decided to create a work that was modern in mood and movement.

The choice of composer, Stan Kenton, was a good one as he represented Grace Kelly's country — America — and his orchestral arrangements are some of the most exciting of their kind for concert jazz. Michael Charnley, representing Britain, is the nearest choreographic parallel to this kind of music. His *Symphony for Fun* has already proved to be an invaluable work in Festival Ballet's repertoire, and he is the nearest to a Modern Dance choreographer we have in England. From France, André Lavasseur has already shown that few people designing for ballet today have a better sense of theatre and colour.

There is really no story to the ballet and it can be interpreted as the spectator wishes. It is possible to imagine that it is symbolic of the romance that had its culmination in the occasion for which the work was created. But nobody need take this too seriously, as it is far better for audiences to see in the work what they feel to be most fitting, and possibly regard the ballet as nothing other than an excuse for dancing.

CHOREOGRAPHY

MICHAEL CHARNLEY has developed a style of his own; it is a mixture of classical technique and Modern Dance. This first started to form in *Movimientos* for Ballet Workshop (now in the repertoire of Ballet Rambert) and later found more definite shape in his *Symphony for Fun* for Festival Ballet. His later ballet *Alice in Wonderland* was really, to him, alien territory. Since then Charnley has produced and arranged dances for various revues and musicals. To see his work at its best it is really necessary for the dancers to have been trained in Modern Dance technique.

With *Homage to a Princess*, Charnley has reached greater maturity: he has polished up his style. It would now be possible to see a Charnley ballet and without looking at a programme immediately recognise him as the choreographer. To achieve this is an important step in the career of a choreographer—the aquisition of a signature.

But we audiences are greedy people, we always expect that new works from young choreographers are going to show a great advance on each occasion. The fault lies more with us if this is not the case. Those who expect to see a great advance in Charnley's creative work in this new ballet will be disappointed. The important thing is that it is not a step back from *Symphony for Fun* but several paces forward.

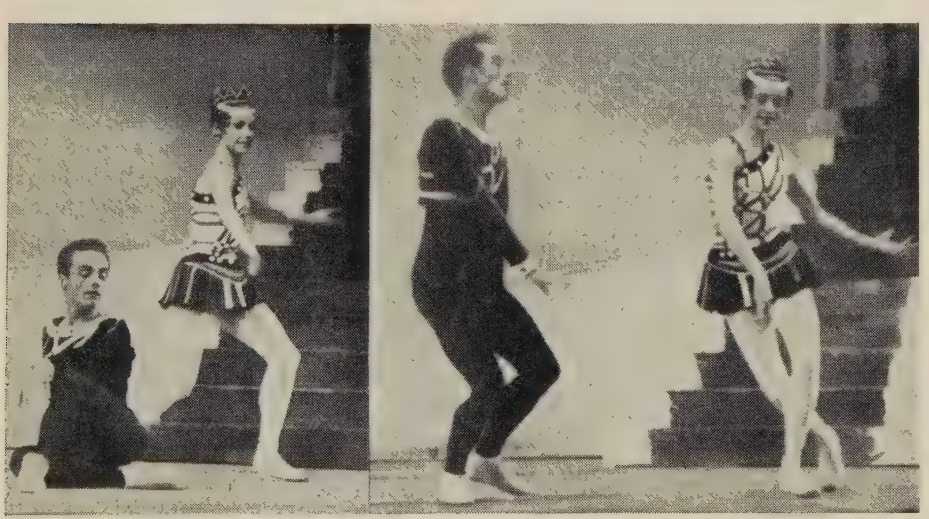
Against the opinion of the majority, I feel the ballet opens very well with its immobile group of young men gradually galvanised into action by Anita Landa. Ensembles, sambas and tangos follow each other in quick succession and the stage seems to be continually full of movement, occasionally too much so. To me the choreographic disappointment of the work comes with the *pas de deux* for Gilpin and Wright in the third movement.

One imagines that Charnley creates for Gilpin as he would for himself, and therefore this *pas de deux* should have been the pinnacle of the ballet. I do not think it was the fault of the dancers that it failed to be so. There were certain *longeurs* which should never happen in a ballet as short as this. It was the longest period of repose in a lively work and more eloquent use could have been made of it.

FIRST MOVEMENT: Louis Godfrey, Anita Landa and Ronald Emblen in the opening movement of Charnley's Homage to a Princess. *Having set the male dancers in motion, Landa then dances with two of them.* *Photo: Leon Ward*

SECOND MOVEMENT: Emblen, Marilyn Burr and Godfrey in the pas de trois. *Photo: Jeffrey Kovel*

Right: A moment a few seconds later with Burr in one of the interesting lifts which are a feature of this movement. *Photo: Oggero*



THIRD MOVEMENT: John Gilpin and Belinda Wright in the pas de deux *which forms the whole of this movement. These two gifted English dancers began their ballet careers with the Ballet Rambert and later were both members of Roland Petit's Ballets de Paris. Since joining Festival Ballet they have danced together in the* Harlequinade Pas de Deux, The Nutcracker, Giselle, Vision of Marguérite, Alice in Wonderland, *and other ballets.* *Photos: Oggero*

However, the last two movements, which include a spirited tango by Anita Landa, bring it all to an exciting and impressive conclusion. Frankly, I believe the work suffered at its first performances in Monte Carlo from coming at the end of a very long programme, and it is not easy for a ballet to make a great impression after the impact of a work such as Lander's *Etudes*. Well placed in a programme, this new ballet will no doubt create a very favourable impression by the time it gets to London.

DANCING

THERE is no doubt that as far as dancing is concerned *Homage to a Princess* belongs to Anita Landa. She has the crisp, precise style that is just right for Charnley. Her every entrance has impact and when she is on the stage, one has eyes for nobody else. Wright and Burr, fine dancers as they are, have yet to assimilate this form of dance. Burr was too spiky and classical, Wright too emotional, and her emotions were not conveyed by her whole body. It is very important in works by choreographers of this kind that every emotion should come from the use of the whole body, and this was realised by Louis Godfrey and Ronald Emblen, who proved to be admirable supports. Gilpin cannot fail to be an exciting dancer at all times, and he did all that he could with his part. That he failed to shine as he did in the third movement of *Symphony for Fun* was due to the choreography. The remainder of the company entered into the spirit of the ballet, and with more performances a few ragged patches will no doubt be tidied up. Precision is essential in ballets of this kind.

MUSIC

STAN KENTON is second to none as a composer of moods and rhythms for his own type of symphonic jazz orchestra, but when his compositions are played by a routine theatre orchestra, it is another matter. Some of his music for this work, so stimulating on records, seemed little removed from the works of standard American light composers and some of the rhythms appeared to tax the powers of the Monte Carlo orchestra—heaven alone knows what will happen with some of the orchestras which accompany Festival Ballet! Not that there was anything to complain of in the score as effective light music, and good music for dancing at that, but Kenton has come to stand for something so much more. The opening and closing movements lent themselves best to the ballet as a whole.

DECOR

LAVASSEUR has designed a number of works which decoratively splendidly evoke another age. That he can be equally successful with a contemporary ballet came as a pleasant surprise. Against a blue sky and a stylised throne, the dancers in red, white and black stand out in sharp relief. This limitation of his palette makes very good theatre.

Sometimes the costumes are white with black and red decoration, sometimes black with white and red decoration, sometimes red with black and white decoration. The asymmetrical stripes on the upper part of each costume enhanced the line of the body, occasionally giving a skeletal look which was flattering.

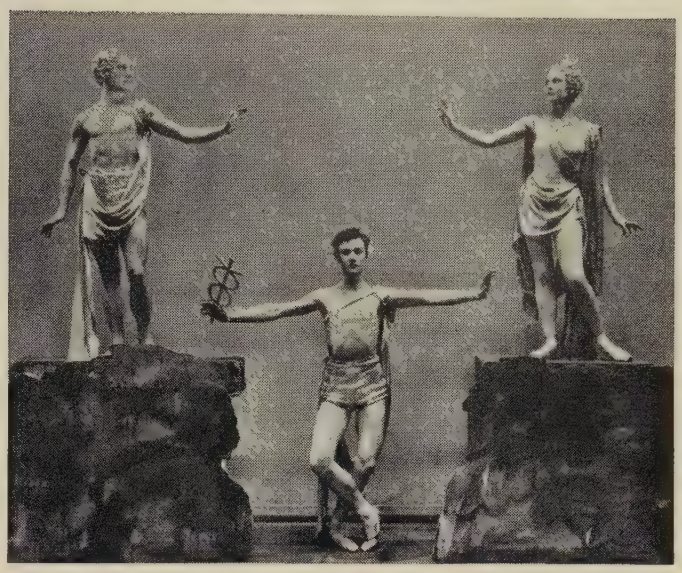
The skirts of the girls are formed of ribbons of material and their contrapuntal movement created an interesting effect ideally suited to the music. If there is any fault to find it is that some of the head-dresses were rather hard and, although *chic* in design, were not entirely becoming to all the dancers. Anita Landa's red dress should also have been shorter to keep her in line with the rest of the principals. It seems that Lavasseur not only has a wonderful sense of line, no doubt a legacy of his years with Christian Dior, but also a sense of what is fitting for movement. **Peter Williams**

Sadler's Wells Silver Jubilee

Part 2—The Company Develops

The Sadler's Wells Ballet is now 25 years old. Last month Clive Barnes wrote about the company's beginnings. This month he takes up the story, telling of the years which saw the rise of Margot Fonteyn as a ballerina and of Frederick Ashton as an important choreographer, continuing through the difficult war years in which the company proved its mettle.

Compiled by CLIVE BARNES



THE GODS GO A-BEGGING: *Mercury (Richard Ellis) between two Divinities (William Chappell and Pearl Argyle) in the apotheosis of de Valois' ballet to Handel music.*

LAST month we traced the history of the company from its earliest beginnings up till the end of 1935, and left it at the start of its first season after the departure of its ballerina, Alicia Markova. Although to many of the audience Markova provided the sole *raison d'être* for the Vic-Wells Ballet her going proved a blessing not only for the dancer herself, but even for the company, which was thereby forced to stand on its own merits.

As a digression it is perhaps interesting to note that the Vic-Wells' experience was paralleled nearly 20 years later by that of London's Festival Ballet. And, of course, both were following the pattern originally laid down by the Ballet Rambert; in fact, one is tempted to advise anyone wishing to form a British ballet company in the future, first to obtain the services of the eternal Markova, and then to part with them.

P. W. Manchester has written: "The Vic-Wells Ballet of today was born on the 27th September, 1935. That night its real work began." To this may be added the comment of the company's later historian, Mary Clarke, that: "The period from September 1935 up to the outbreak of war in September 1939 was one of rich artistic activity at Sadler's Wells."

This was the company's second period—the period of the "repertory ballet company," the characteristics and functions of which have been memorably described by de Valois in her book, written in 1937, *Invitation to the Ballet*. Here was a creative artistic policy directing a well-integrated team of dancers, with inventiveness and good taste as its key-notes. De Valois wrote: "One theatre with a ballet company has wisely reduced the stage presention of floral tributes to first and last nights and the first performances of new works." This is not the least important sentence in a very important book.

Towards the end of the 1935–39 period there were indications heralding the company's third phase in which it was to become a full-scale national ballet, but this phase was postponed by the war. Yet this was the strangest of postponements which, under the stress of curious circumstance, probably led to an eventual acceleration in the company's rate of development.

Setting the pace

1936.—The season that had begun the previous September continued. The first important new work was *The Gods go a-Begging*. The theme (by Boris Kochno) and the Handel-Beecham music had been used previously, first by Balanchine and later Lichine, but the de Valois version was a charming evocation of a Watteau *fête champêtre*, which might even now be worth revival. Before the end of the 1935–36 season de Valois mounted another new version of a Diaghilev ballet, this time *Barabau*, which had rather less success.

In February, Ashton, now the resident choreographer, produced his first important ballet for his new company, *Apparitions*. This was a Gothic-romantic piece with drugs, monks, hussars, a poet and a mysterious beloved, the whole concoction being set to music by Liszt (beautifully selected by Lambert) and decked out with decor and costumes by Cecil Beaton, some of the costumes actually being executed by the famous Karinska. Despite its promising theme, lovely designs and some excellent choreography (as well as some that was not so good) perhaps the most important thing about *Apparitions* is that it came before the treatment of similar themes by Massine, Nijinska and Fokine. For the first time the Vic-Wells, instead of following the Ballet Russe, was setting the pace.

The 1936–37 season, which opened in September, was one of the most brilliant in the company's history. For it Ashton produced a trio of ballets that established the Vic-Wells as one of the foremost creative companies in the world.

Although the season started quietly with de Valois' *Prometheus*, before the end of the year Ashton had produced the first of his aces, *Nocturne*. A novelletish story that might have been inspired by the agony column of a women's magazine was used for a ballet of graceful beauty and poignancy. Ashton's choreography was on a continuously high plane of inspiration, Sophie Fedorovitch's *decor* and costumes gave the work a perfect setting, and the tone poem *Paris* by Delius fitted the ballet like a glove. The performance was notable not only for Fonteyn and Helpmann, but also for the comparative newcomer June Brae.

During 1936 two other events occurred that had some significance for the growth of the national Ballet. The first was the formation of the Vic-Wells Ballet Fund under the inspiration of Arnold Haskell. The Fund, which opened with a Five-Year plan in which to achieve its objectives, was designed to act as a Fairy Godmother to the company, giving financial assistance for the cost of new productions, teaching grants, and financial help to dancers either injured or retired. In recent years the activities of the Fund, now known as the Sadler's Wells Benevolent Fund, have been entirely restricted to helping dancers and ex-dancers, but during the company's formative period and the war its patronage was of great assistance. It is important to remember that before the war the entire Vic-Wells organisation

APPARITIONS: *The dead Poet (Robert Helpmann) is borne out while the Woman in the Ball Dress (Margot Fonteyn) mourns. The final moment of Ashton's ballet to Gordon Jacob's arrangement of Liszt music and designed by Cecil Beaton.*

LES PATINEURS: *Pamela May, Margot Fonteyn and June Brae in Ashton's popular skating ballet to Meyerbeer music, first created in* 1937. *Photo: Debenham*

WEDDING BOUQUET: *The Bride (Mary Honer) and the Bridegroom (Robert Helpmann) in a humorously grotesque* pas de deux *from Ashton's work with a book by Gertrude Stein. Photo: Anthony*

did not receive one penny piece from the National Exchequer. The Vic-Wells Ballet was born with no golden spoon in its mouth.

The other event is of infinitely less importance but of some interest. At the beginning of the year there was published the first full book (as opposed to pamphlet) on the company's activities. This thin edge of the wedge was *Talking of Ballet* by the late Jasper Howlett.

Creations.—*The Gods go-Begging* (de Valois-Handel/Beecham-Stevenson) with Pearl Argyle and William Chappell; *Siesta* (Ashton-Walton-Matilda Etches) with Argyle and Helpmann; *Apparitions* (Ashton-Liszt/Jacob-Beaton) with Helpmann, Fonteyn, Turner and Maurice Brooke; *Barabau* (De Valois-Vittorio Rieti-Burra) with Turner, Ashton and de Valois; *Prometheus* (De Valois-Beethoven/Lambert-John Banting) with Helpmann, de Valois and Brae; *Nocturne* (Ashton-Delius-Fedorovitch) with Fonteyn, Helpmann, Brae and Ashton.

Markova's successor

1937.—One of the difficulties of establishing a national Ballet in England was that the attempt was being made some 200 years too late. A national Ballet must to some extent fulfil the functions of a museum, an art gallery and a laboratory, or, if you prefer it, it must exist in the past, present and future tenses. De Valois had nothing to put in her museum, and consequently had to import a tradition. The traditions of the Diaghilev ballet were not available to her, but the presence in Western Europe of Nicholai Sergueeff, formerly of St. Petersburg's Maryinsky Theatre, made possible the adoption of part of the tradition and repertory of the Imperial Russian Ballet. As we saw last month this opportunity was eagerly seized.

The production of the full-length Russian classics demands a prima ballerina, and after the departure of Markova in 1935 the importance of this side of the company's activities tended to decline. The gradual emergence of Fonteyn, the first home-grown ballerina, enabled the policy to proceed, and during the next 12 years one of the characteristics of the company was the adoption and the eventual naturalisation of the Imperial tradition.

At the beginning of the year the company presented a new production of *Casse Noisette*. Not outstandingly successful, it did however serve to re-emphasise Fonteyn's promise as a classical ballerina, a promise that was further underlined 11 days later, when she danced the title-role in *Giselle* for the first time.

If this was Fonteyn's season it was also Ashton's. In February *Les Patineurs* was given its first performance, to be followed two months later by *A Wedding Bouquet*. From the beginning de Valois had been striving for a high standard of technique from her dancers, and slowly the general level had been rising. In such ballets as *Les Rendezvous*, to say nothing of the classical repertory, quite considerable demands were put upon the dancers, but *Les Patineurs* was the first work to show off technique in a thoroughly sensational manner, the first to offer virtuoso dancing *à la Russe*.

Not only could Mary Honer and Elizabeth Miller spin with the best of their foreign rivals, but in Turner is was obvious that the Vic-Wells possessed a dancer as good as any of his type in Europe, while the *corps de ballet* also had a fine opportunity to shine. Most of the lessons of *Les Patineurs*, which in any case was a thundering good ballet, were already obvious to the regular audience, but this served to bring it home to the general public.

One of the advantages Ashton brought to the Vic-Wells was his cosmopolitan sophistication. This was well illustrated by *A Wedding Bouquet*, one of the wittiest ballets ever made. Anything more unlike the old "Academy of Choreographic Art" days would be difficult to imagine. It was, incidentally, this ballet which originally demonstrated Helpmann's remarkable gifts as a comedian.

The company was now doing nicely. In addition to the established Fonteyn, Helpmann, Argyle, Turner, May and Brae, plenty of other talent was beginning to make its presence felt —Honer, Miller, Molly Brown, Michael Somes, Leslie Edwards and Richard Ellis. The quality of designs was fast improving, and with Constant Lambert as Musical Director the musical side of the venture was as near perfection as limited resources and an imperfect world could make it. Consequently it was no surprise when the British Council invited the company to appear at the Paris International Exhibition in June.

Unfortunately the British Council apparently regarded its duties as discharged merely by the invitation and arranged so little in the way of publicity for the company that the season was played to largely empty houses. During this Paris season de Valois' ballet *Checkmate* had its *première* (under the *nom de guerre* of *Echec et Mat*), but all in all, despite very favourable notices, it was not a very auspicious start to the company's career as an artistic ambassador.

Checkmate had its first English performance at Newcastle during a provincial tour. The year's work was completed with a couple of revivals of old works.

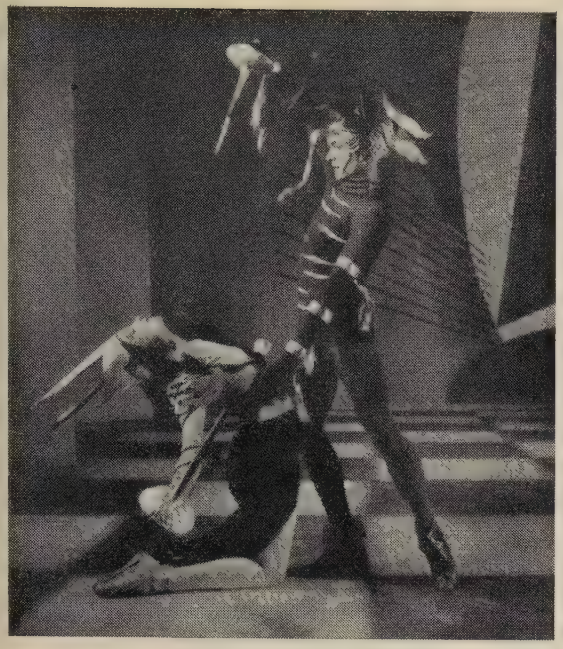
This was a vintage year in English Ballet. Not only was it a wonderful year for the Wells, but Marie Rambert's Ballet Club also had many successes, and the "Russian" companies of de Basil and René Blum both played long seasons to capacity houses. However, the year ended in tragedy, for on November 25 Lilian Baylis died. Her interests were always divided between the three children of her theatre, the opera, the ballet and the drama company, but no one, with the exception of de Valois herself, did more to make the dream of a national Ballet practicable.

Creations.—*Les Patineurs* (Ashton-Meyerbeer/Lambert-Chappell) with Turner, Honer, Miller, May, Brae, Fonteyn and Helpmann; *A Wedding Bouquet* (Ashton-Berners/Stein-Berners) with Honer, Helpmann, Brae, May, Miller, Fonteyn, Julia Farron, de Valois, Turner, Chappell, Newman, Edwards and Somes; *Checkmate* (de Valois-Bliss-McKnight Kauffer) with Brae, Turner, May, Helpmann, Ellis and Somes.

Revivals.—*Casse Noisette* (Ivanov, reproduced by Sergueeff-Tchaikowsky-Mstislav Dobujinsky) with Fonteyn, Helpmann and Newman; *Les Rendezvous* (Ashton-Auber/Lambert-Chappell) with Fonteyn, Turner, Jill Gregory, Ashton and Newman; *The Lord of Burleigh* [C] (Ashton-Mendelssohn/Evans-Derek Hill) with Argyle.

Pearl Argyle leaves

1938.—It had been hoped during the 1937–38 season to revive the full-length *The Sleeping Princess*, the next logical step in the de Valois campaign to annexe the Imperial Russian repertory. However, this project had to be postponed until various structural alterations



CHECKMATE: *The Red Knight (Harold Turner) about to stab the Black Queen (June Brae); his failure to do so leads to his death. A dramatic moment in de Valois' ballet.*

HOROSCOPE: *Margot Fonteyn as the Young Woman (Sun in Virgo) and Michael Somes as the Young Man (Sun in Leo) in a* pas de deux *from the Ashton ballet which first brought Somes to the fore.*

to the theatre had been made that would increase the insufficient back-stage space then available. Nevertheless, the company started the year well, with the production of Ashton's *Horoscope*. This ballet, considered by many to be one of Ashton's masterpieces and set to Lambert's most considerable original ballet score, proved an immense success. At this time Helpmann was acting with the Old Vic drama company (Oberon to Vivien Leigh's Titania) and the ballet was noteworthy for displaying the star talent of Somes. The exquisite purity of May was also shown to its best advantage.

Although the rest of the season's new productions were of fugitive merit, the standard of the company was continuing to improve. At the end of the 1937–38 season Pearl Argyle left the Vic-Wells. Argyle's importance is difficult to estimate at this distance of time. For various reasons she will never loom large in the record books, and she was never fully assimilated by the company, but Haskell has said of her that "she played a major role in the popularisation of British ballet, as an English not an Anglo-Russian dancer." Her retirement left the field completely clear for the absolute supremacy of Fonteyn, although May, Brae and Honer had already become artists of great distinction.

During the summer recess the proposed improvements to the theatre were undertaken, and so made possible the postponed production of *The Sleeping Princess*. This was put into rehearsal at the beginning of the 1938–39 season, but the only new production before the end of the year (and even this was an enlarged version of a ballet first given in Cambridge) was *Harlequin in the Street*. This ballet was chiefly remarkable for the opportunities it gave to the young Alan Carter and Frank Staff (recently returned to the company after an absence of some years) and the delightful decor and costumes by André Derain. An event of more importance was in November when Fonteyn danced Odette-Odile in *Swan Lake* for the first time.

Creations.—*Horoscope* (Ashton-Lambert-Fedorovitch) with Fonteyn, Somes, May, Ellis and Carter; *Le Roi Nu* (de Valois-Françaix-Briggs) with Argyle and Helpmann; *The Judgment of Paris* (Ashton-Lennox Berkeley-Chappell) with Argyle, Miller, Honer, Helpmann and Chappell; *Harlequin in the Street* (Ashton-Couperin-Derain) with Carter, Staff, Somes, Brae and Ellis.

First British 'Beauty'

1939.—Overshadowing the year's work was the production of *The Sleeping Princess*, and this, despite its popularity, was an inspired flop. The decor and costumes by Nadia Benois were depressingly utilitarian, and the dancing was not good enough to justify the revival. In the other classics good performances in the central roles will obscure most of the other deficiencies, but *The Sleeping Princess* demands the best from its entire cast. Fonteyn and Helpmann (the latter in a painfully embrassing costume) made something out of Aurora and her Prince, Honer and Turner were commendable Bluebirds. Yet the important thing, and this de Valois must have realised, was not that the ballet was done well, but that it was done at all.

The only new ballet of the year was Ashton's *Cupid and Psyche* (with the young Farron and Staff in the leads), and this was such a resounding failure that it had to be withdrawn after only a few performances. Creatively the company had struck a lean patch. (In fact, historians years hence may well be of the opinion that nothing of lasting importance was created in the decade that separated *Horoscope* from *Symphonic Variations*, even though such a view still seems extreme today.)

However, the company's plans were still maturing. On March 22 they made their first appearance at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, dancing the Birthday and Wedding Acts of *The Sleeping Princess* at a Gala given in honour of the French President. This theatre had to be the company's ultimate objective if it was ever to become a national Ballet rather than a people's Ballet. Yet the chances of it ever acquiring its permanent occupation seemed rather less than de Valois' chances of becoming the first woman Prime Minister.

Nevertheless de Valois had her plans. These included a scheme (which was, according to Arnold Haskell, to have been begun by the end of 1939) that proposed the enlargement of the school, and with that enlargement the inclusion of general education in the curriculum; the formation of a second company; the engagement of a distinguished guest cheoreographer for a two-year period (possibly Nijinska?), and the production of one work a year by a new young English choreographer.

At the end of the summer tour following the London season, Elizabeth Miller and Frank Staff resigned. The 1939–40 season was due to open on September 18. On September 3 Great Britain declared war on Germany. The Vic-Wells Ballet's struggle for survival had begun.

The London season was out of the question, as all the theatres had closed. The company embarked on a provincial tour, accompanied by Constant Lambert and Hilda Gaunt on two pianos and a lot of cautious optimism.

This was the period of the "phoney war" and the theatre slowly re-opened; on Boxing Day the company opened at Sadler's Wells with full orchestra, the season being guaranteed against loss by the Ballet Fund. On the first night *Les Sylphides* was revived, using the Benois setting (which had been purchased by the Fund) for the first time.

Creation.—*Cupid and Psyche* (Ashton-Berners-Rose) with Farron, Staff, Brae and Somes.

Revivals.—*The Sleeping Princess* (Petipa, reproduced Sergueeff-Tchaikovsky-Nadia Benois) with Fonteyn, Helpmann, Brae, Honer, Turner, John Greenwood, Palma Nye, May, Miller, Farron, Edwards, Ellis, Chappell, Staff, Carter and Somes; *Les Sylphides* (Fokine-Chopin/Jacob-A. Benois) with Fonteyn, Helpmann, Honer and May.

The phoney war

1940.—During the brief New Year season Ashton produced *Dante Sonata*, a work of stress, strain and suffering. This bitter but inconclusive struggle between the Children of Light and the Children of Darkness was given a pathetic frenzy by the whole company. Fedorovitch's *decor* and costumes made a great contribution to the ballet's success as did Lambert's arrangement of the Liszt sonata. The work is interesting to the student of Ashton as marking his first clear steps towards the plotless ballet (the theme being symbolic rather than narrative), and it also marked a divergence from the views on symphonic ballet, which de Valois expressed with some heat and at some length, in *Invitation to the Ballet.*

After a short provincial tour Turner left the company.

April found the Vic-Wells back in London with a new production of *Coppelia*, which included for the first time the third act, and a new ballet by Ashton, *The Wise Virgins*. The *Coppelia* was decoratively (designer, William Chappell) probably the most successful Wells classical revival to date, and *The Wise Virgins*, a quiet ballet of simple ritual, monumentally well-designed by Rex Whistler, showed that Ashton's creative ability had not been dampened by the war.

In May the British Council arranged another European tour for the company, this time to Holland and Belgium, who were still neutral, but only just. The publicity for this visit was apparently better handled than for the Paris trip in 1937, but unfortunately the tour was cut short by the Nazi invasion of Holland. The company was stranded, and only escaped by the skin of its teeth and at the expense of the decor, costumes and music of six of the most popular ballets in the repertory.

Within three weeks of arriving home the Vic-Wells Ballet opened a London season; never before, and probably only once since, has the organising genius of de Valois (and Lambert) been so amply demonstrated. A month later de Valois produced a new comedy ballet, *The Prospect before Us*. Although this had a scenario that was not much harder to follow than Bradshaw, there was a good tipsy solo for Helpmann, and the Rowlandson-inspired designs of Roger Furse were a delight. Later in this season *Façade* was restored to the repertory, with new designs by John Armstrong.

Despite the war and the disastrous Dutch expedition the company was doing well, but this Indian summer could not last and the winter of their discontent was soon at hand.

The Battle of Britain soon made the theatrical situation in London untenable, and at the end of the year Tyrone Guthrie, at that time administrator of the Old Vic and Sadler's Wells, decided to base the companies in Burnley. This period, which lasted some two years, has been well-described by Edward Dent in his *A Theatre for Everybody*. The ballet's difficulties were intensified by the ever-increasing demands of the call-up on the roster of male dancers.

This problem, despite certain agitation in the Press, lasted throughout the war. Yet the company was now dancing more performances than ever before, and being seen by people to whom ballet had previously been no more than a word.

Creations.—*Dante Sonata* (Ashton-Liszt/Lambert-Fedorovitch) with Fonteyn, Somes, May, Brae and Helpmann; *The Wise Virgins* (Ashton-Bach/Walton-Whistler) with Fonteyn and Somes; *The Prospect before Us* (de Valois-Boyce/Lambert-Furse) with Helpmann, Newman, May, Carter, John Hart, Ashton, Moreton, Honer and Margaret Dale.

Revivals.—*Coppelia* (Ivanov and Cechetti, reproduced by Sergueeff-Delibes-Chappell) with Honer, Helpmann, Newman, May and Brae; *Façade* (Ashton-Walton-Armstrong) with Ashton, Fonteyn, May, Brae and Helpmann.

New London home

1941.—Thanks to the generosity of Bronson Albery the Vic-Wells companies found a London home at the New Theatre, and in January the Sadler's Wells Ballet (as it was now called) had a lengthy West End season for the first time, even though the performances were at the unfashionable, if practical, times of 2.30 and 4.30 p.m.

It was during this January that Ashton's *The Wanderer* was first given. Lambert had performed his usual miracle in the transcription of the score for the two pianos to which the company was now reduced, and the choice of Graham Sutherland for the decor and costumes was adventurous and stimulating. The choreography was among the best Ashton has ever composed in the symphonic *genre*, the *pas de deux* for May and Somes being particularly notable, as was Fonteyn's role, which was probably the first to stress the formidable technique she had even by then developed.

The company started to alternate London seasons with provincial tours and entertaining the Forces and factory workers under the auspices of ENSA. In May de Valois produced *Orpheus and Eurydice*, best remembered for the sensitive performance of May as Eurydice.

The call-up of male dancers was really beginning to wreak havoc with the company. In August Ashton himself was called into the Forces, and of the pre-war male dancers only Helpmann and the young John Hart were left. Helpmann really was the proverbial tower of strength (without him—he was granted exemption from the Forces as the key member of the company—the ballet could not have continued), and Hart was projected into role after role, achieving the remarkable distinction of having danced all the male classical leads before his twenty-first birthday. Other young dancers were coming to the fore, notably John Field and Ray Powell, who came up from the school this year. The situation was further eased by the acquisition of Leo Kersley, Gordon Hamilton and David Paltenghi. Although Kersley only stayed a year, the other two dancers were permanent assets throughout the war years.

As if de Valois had not troubles enough, Pamela May suffered a serious accident to her knee and had to leave the company for nearly two years. Before this, May had been developing into a classical ballerina of the very first rank; this injury not only deprived the company of her services at a critical time, but, and what was more important, it left her with a weakness which she never completely overcame, so that she was unable to attain the position her merits deserved and her eventual retirement was made regrettably early.

Another serious loss was in the temporary retirement of June Brae. However, a very talented little girl, Beryl Grey, joined the company at the end of the year, and she was to become the first English baby-ballerina.

Creations.—*The Wanderer* (Ashton-Schubert-Sutherland) with Helpmann, Fonteyn, May, Somes, Honer, Dale and Deryk Mendel; *Orpheus and Eurydice* (de Valois-Gluck-Fedorovitch) with Helpmann, May, Fonteyn and Honer.

Three from Helpmann

1942.—This was Helpmann's year. Ashton's departure and the administrative burdens laid on de Valois made the appointment of a new choreographer a pressing necessity. Tudor was in America, Staff, and Gore were in the Forces (Gore in any case being inexperienced), leaving only Andrée Howard and Keith Lester available. But the obvious choice was Helpmann, who had already had a little choreographic experience with the RAD Production Club, knew the company backwards, and enjoyed a vast personal popularity with the audience.

In his first year as a choroeographer, Helpmann produced three ballets *Comus*, *Hamlet* and *The Birds*. All these ballets were produced under the most trying of conditions, when all materials were scarce, rehearsal time limited, energies sapped, and the company bereft of nearly every male technician worthy of the name. No choreographer could have had a less promising environment, and Helpmann's position could hardly have been made happier by the knowledge that a great deal depended upon his success.

Comus was a commendable apprentice effort, remarkable in that it possessed more theatrical know-how than most of the ballets of even experienced choreographers. *The Birds* was slight; technical exercises by a choreographer accused (and justly) of being unable to compose fluently in the classical vocabulary. But *Hamlet* was a magnificent *coup de théâtre* that breathed a lusty life into war-time ballet-going.

Like all of Helpmann's ballets *Hamlet* was extravagantly over-praised at the time. It was not essentially a good ballet for the simple reason it did not have good choreography, but it was breath-taking, exciting and theatrical. It was just what the company needed, and no one should have been surprised when it failed to survive that need. The *decor* and costumes of Leslie Hurry matched all the qualities of the ballet as a whole.

Although Hart and Field were eventually called-up during this year, the acquisition of Alexis Rassine was a great asset. Other dancers to join this year were Pauline Clayden, Celia Franca, Moira Shearer and Franklin White. Mary Honer left for the commercial theatre, and most of her roles were taken by Peggy Van Praagh, who had joined the company the previous year. Van Praagh shared the part of Swanilda in *Coppelia* with Fonteyn, who added this to her quiver of ballerina successes just before the end of the year. Another notable assumption was the first performance in June of Odette-Odile by the 15-years-old Beryl Grey.

This year saw the publication of the first serious account of the company's history—Miss P. W. Manchester's *Vic-Wells: A Ballet Progress*.

Creations.—*Comus* (Helpmann-Purcell/Lambert-Messel) with Helpmann, Fonteyn, Hart, Paltenghi, Dale and Moyra Fraser; *Hamlet* (Helpmann-Tchaikowsky-Hurry) with Helpmann, Fonteyn, Franca, Paltenghi, Hart, Hamilton, Kersley, Rassine and Dale; *The Birds* (Helpmann-Respighi-Chiang Yee) with Grey, Rassine, Fraser, Hamilton, Dale and Joan Sheldon.

In on the boom

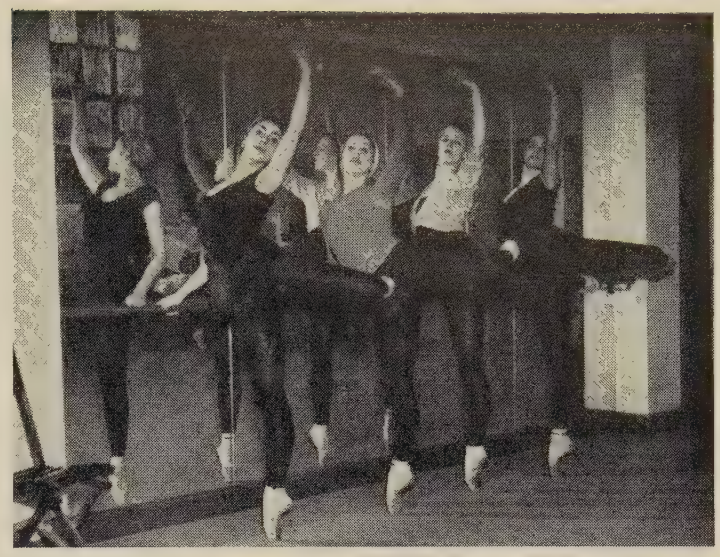
1943.—Ballet had boomed. Companies were everywhere, like mushrooms. The queues outside the New Theatre were getting longer and longer, and Arnold Haskell wrote a book called *The National Ballet—A History and a Manifesto*. Later (in 1946) Haskell pointed out that the company was saved from bankruptcy in 1939 "only by the war and the theatrical boom that followed."

Certainly financially the Wells had never done so well in its life. Curiously enough, far from this being a matter for congratulation, the company in some circles was accused of selling its soul to Mammon. But the ordinary ballet-goer did not find success so shocking and was only grateful for the company's survival.

The first important event of the year was the return of Ashton, on special leave from the Air Force, to produce *The Quest*. Despite the promise of a collaboration between Ashton, Walton and John Piper, the ballet became bogged down in its Spenserian scenario, and proved disappointing. As Helpmann took a rest from his labours of last year, the only other new ballet was provided by de Valois. This was *Promenade*, first given in Edinburgh, which, although it was fairly soon worn out by excessive repetition, had a lively *finale*, and gave opportunities to some of the younger dancers, including Grey and Shearer.

The outstanding event of the year was, however, the eagerly awaited new production of *Swan Lake*. It took the designer Leslie Hurry three and a half shots before he eventually got this ballet right (which he finally achieved in 1952 in another place), and this first attempt was too individual an interpretation, but Salder's Wells took the opportunity to convert some of their new-found wealth into a far more elaborate production than the classics had

LE ROI NU: Pearl Argyle as The Empress in de Valois' ballet based on Hans Andersen's fairy tale The Emperor's New Clothes.



BALLERINAS IN WARTIME: Fonteyn, Mary Honer, Pamela May and June Brae during the first winter of the war.

previously been awarded; so despite the wartime austerity the ballet came closer than before to the splendour it needs for its complete success.

At the end of the year Pamela May returned to the stage, dancing in Sasha Machov's ballet in the Sadler's Wells Opera production of *The Bartered Bride*, with an exceptionally talented group of Wells students, including, if memory serves, Brian Shaw, Philip Chatfield, Kenneth Melville and Rosemary Lindsay.

Creations.—*The Quest* (Ashton-Walton-Piper) with Helpmann, Fonteyn, Grey, Franca, Edwards and Shearer; *Promenade* (de Valois-Haydn/Evans-Stevenson) with Hamilton, Grey, Paltenghi, Clayden, Shearer, Rassine and Powell.

Revival.—*The Swan Lake* (Petipa and Ivanov, reproduced by Sergueeff-Tchaikovsky-Hurry) with Fonteyn, Helpmann, Dale, Sheldon and Rassine.

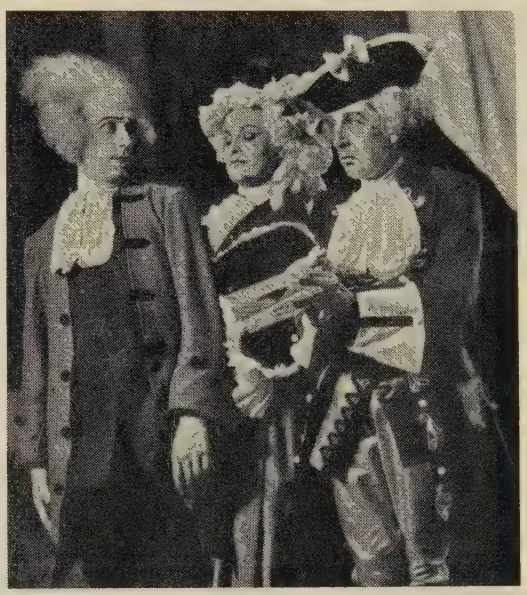
A morality by Helpmann

1944.—The first new work of the season was a revival, elaborately designed, by Rex Whistler, of *Le Spectre de la Rose*. The revival had the benefit of Karsavina's advice but was not successful. While the company were on a

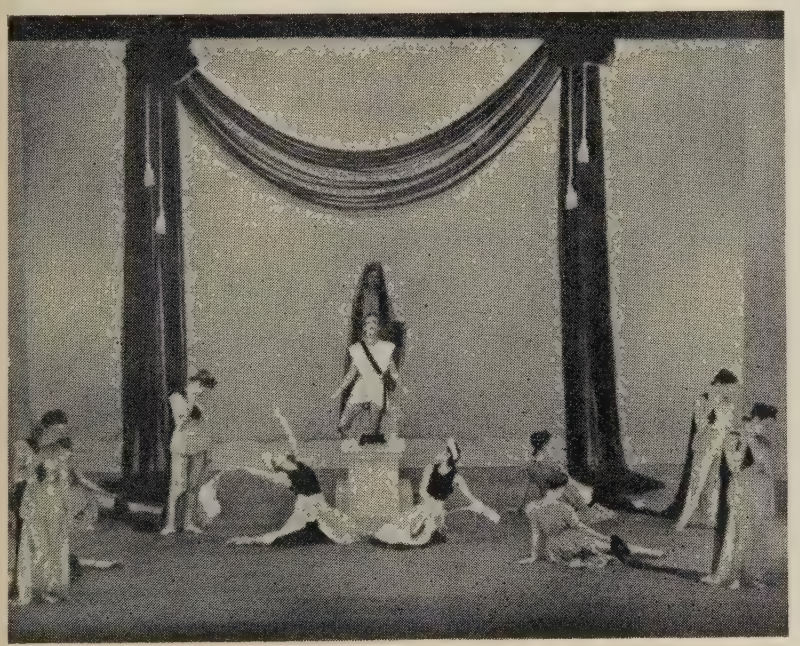
THE PROSPECT BEFORE US: *Mr. Taylor (Claude Newman, left), manager of the King's Theatre in* 1789, *engages the French choreographer, Noverre (Frederick Ashton) while Madame Noverre (Ursula Moreton) scrutinises the contract.*

This is one of the many amusing episodes in de Valois' ballet about the two rival theatres—the King's Theatre and the Pantheon. In a remarkable way, de Valois managed to evoke the spirit of the 18*th-century theatre, both back-stage and in the condensed version of a performance of a typical* ballet villageois, *given on the opening night of the Pantheon Theatre.*

The ballet was revived a few years ago by the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet when Robert Helpmann returned to give some guest performances as the bibulous Mr. O'Reilly, manager of the Pantheon, a part which he created.



ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE: *Orpheus (Robert Helpmann) mourns the death of Eurydice. The opening moment in de Valois' ballet to Gluck music.*



COMUS: *Helpmann in the title role and Fonteyn as the Lady in Helpmann's first ballet for the Wells.*
Photo: Tunbridge-Sedgwick

provincial tour, Helpmann took leave of absence to appear with the Old Vic in the play version of *Hamlet*. It ought to be remembered that at any time during the war Helpmann could have deserted to the legitimate theatre, and at any time such a desertion would have had dire, if not fatal, results on the company.

The only new ballet during the first half of the year was *The Spider's Banquet*. Although this was Andrée Howard's first ballet for the company, the previous year she had been appointed as choreographer to the Ballet School, to give the students experience of working under a professional choreographer. *The Spider's Banquet*, with its impressionistic music, Fabre-like theme and fragmentary choreography, did not bring the house down, an occurrence nearly achieved that season in anything but a metaphorical sense by a near-miss from a flying bomb.

On the company's next visit to London it deserted the New and took up its quarters at the Princes Theatre. *Carnaval* was given with something approximating to the original Bakst designs, but fared the general fate of Wells Fokine revivals at that time.

Of much more importance was Helpmann's new ballet *Miracle in the Gorbals*. This was hailed in many quarters as a masterpiece, but despite its many qualities (including nearly perfect collaboration between the librettist, Michael Benthall, and the composer, designer and choreographer) the work was really not more than first-class theatrical hokum. However, it gave the company the chance to dance in a work right off their beaten track, and the ballet was distinguished by the many fine acting performances they gave in it.

During the course of the year Grey and Rassine had made their debuts in *Giselle*, and Pamela May had danced Odette to Shearer's Odile (for the first time at the King's, Hammersmith), the company now took the step of announcing the names of the principals appearing in classical ballets. Although the step was (and sometimes still is) much criticised, it seemed logical and fair. The regular audience certainly wanted it (even at the New Theatre an elaborate intelligence service had arisen to provide just such information), and the casual audience, who for the most part only wanted to see Fonteyn and Helpmann, had no right to feel cheated if they attended a performance for which they were not announced.

Creations.—*The Spider's Banquet* (Howard-Roussel-Michael Ayrton) with Franca, Shearer, Clayden and Henry Danton; *Miracle in the Gorbals* (Helpmann-Bliss-Burra) with Helpmann, Clayden, Franca, Paltenghi, Shearer, Rassine, Edwards and Hamilton.

Revivals.—*Le Spectre de la Rose* (Fokine-Weber/Berlioz-Whistler) with Fonteyn and Rassine; *Carnaval* (Fokine-Schumann-Bakst) with Fonteyn, Rassine, Helpmann, May Farron, Clayden, Paltenghi, Hamilton and Edwards.

Return to Europe

1945.—At the beginning of the year the company started once more its interrupted overseas travel and undertook a lengthy tour of Belgium and France on behalf of ENSA. This was highly successful with both the Forces and the civilian audiences, and the company played in both Paris and Brussels.

Originally it had been intended for the company to undertake a goodwill tour of South America on behalf of the British Council, but the end of the European war made this unnecessary. The Sadler's Wells Ballet consequently returned to London, once more and for the last time, to the New Theatre. As the project for a ballet by Helpmann (*Dorian Grey*) had been shelved in favour of the South American tour, no new work could be given during the season. However, both Turner and Somes were able to re-join the company, and a few weeks later Ashton returned.

For the greater part of the war the Sadler's Wells Theatre had been used as a Rest Centre for the homeless. In June it re-opened with Britten's opera *Peter Grimes*, and at the end of July the ballet company returned for an eight-weeks season, the longest full ballet season in the history of the theatre. Once again no new works were given, Ashton contenting himself with reviving and polishing up his old repertory.

The company ended the war tired but triumphant, bloody but unbowed. Certainly it had lost much; creatively the record of the war years, naturally enough, had not been an inspiring one. Also, although a fairly large group of dancers were now more mature and more able than their predecessors in 1939, the general level was not too high. The standard of male dancing had reached a low ebb and the repertory was tired. On the credit side of the picture was the large, new audience (less well informed than before the war, but enthusiastic —and larger) and the money the company had been able to ring up in the till.

The company girded its loins for the opposition it would have to face from foreign competitors now the war was over, and prepared for its great adventure, its great leap into the unknown. A first season at Covent Garden. It was all rather like snakes and ladders. After all the pre-war plans had been abandoned, after the company had skated dizzily down the snakes of war-time difficulties, and struggled up the short ladders of war-time booms, here they were being offered a huge, long ladder that would whisk them straight to their objective. All they had to do was to go and try. In any case they had no alternative—they went.

THE QUEST: *St. George (Helpmann) discovers Una (Fonteyn) in the hands of Sansloy (Alexis Rassine) in Ashton's ballet based on Spenser's* The Faery Queen. *Photo: Tunbridge-Sedgwick*

NEXT MONTH: The story of the Sadler's Wells Ballet will be concluded, bringing it up to date from the time that the company first appeared at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden.

COVER STORIES

THIS month's front cover, by Denis de Marney, is of Sara Neil, Donald Britton and Walter Trevor of the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet in Rodrigues' *Blood Wedding*. This popular dramatic ballet will be given when the company return to their home theatre for a season on May 29 to June 16.

SARA Neil was born in Wellington, New Zealand. She started dancing at the age of six and took her R.A.D. examinations before coming to England in 1950. She studied at the Sadler's Wells School for one year before joining the Theatre Ballet in 1951 under the name of Doreen Brown. She created roles in *Café des Sports* and also in *Danses Concertantes*. Today she dances most of the principal roles in the company's repertoire.

DONALD BRITTON was born in London but spent most of his early life in Bristol where he studied at the Maddocks School. He won a scholarship to the Sadler's Wells School in 1944 and joined the Theatre Ballet in 1946 when he immediately danced solo roles. In 1947 he went to Covent Garden as a soloist and then went into the R.A.F. in 1949. Completing his military service he returned to the Theatre Ballet in 1951 where he has remained ever since, gradually taking over all the principal male roles.

WALTER TREVOR was born in Manchester and started dancing with the Ballet Club there. He won a scholarship to the Sadler's Wells School and joined the Theatre Ballet in 1948. After his military service from 1949–51 he returned to the Theatre Ballet where he has remained ever since as an important soloist.

Fanfare for the Wells

NEW RECORDS
Reviewed by DAVID HUNT

Sadler's Wells Ballet Silver Jubilee. *Comus—Overture* and *Minuet* (Purcell arr. Lambert); *The Prospect Before Us—Fugue in D* (Boyce arr. Lambert); *Harlequin in the Street—Allegro* (Couperin orch. Jacob); *The Lord of Burleigh—Agitato* and *Allegro vivace* (Mendelssohn orch. Jacob); *Les Rendezvous—Allegro non troppo* and *Allegro* (Auber arr. Lambert); *The Rake's Progress—Sarabande* and *Orgy* (Gordon); *Apparitions—Consolation* and *Galop* (Liszt orch. Jacob); *Horoscope—Waltz for the Gemini* (Lambert); *A Wedding Bouquet—Tango* and *Waltz* (Berners); *Adam Zero—Dance of Summer* (Bliss); *Cinderella—Waltz* and *Midnight* (Prokofiev). Covent Garden Orchestra and Chorus (Robert Irving). HMV CLP1070. 12in. 33*s.* 11½*d.*

THIS splendid recorded tribute to Sadler's Wells has been sensibly planned so that, instead of devoting valuable space to excerpts from the classics and to other ballets already available on records, an interesting out-of-the-way choice has been made, mostly from less familiar scores from the company's earlier days.

The *Cinderella* excerpts serve as a reminder of English ballet's debt to Russia and also, possibly, of the company's forthcoming exchange visit with the Bolshoi Ballet; but might it not have been a better idea to stress the "English-ness" of the home-grown product by including instead, say, some of Lambert's *Tiresias* music, or more of Bliss's fine score for *Adam Zero*, which we will almost certainly never have the chance of hearing again in the theatre?

Irving and the Covent Garden Orchestra manage their almost bewildering succession of "quick changes" with aplomb and dash. Only *The Rake's Progress* excerpts fall a little flat, partly because of the brusque nature of the performance and also, no doubt, because Gavin Gordon's expert score is so much part and parcel of the ballet that it sounds lost away from Whistler's atmospheric sets.

Some of the most enjoyable moments are provided by the Auber music from *Les Rendezvous*—we must have, eventually, a complete recording of this score, or, better still, a revival of the ballet, by the Covent Garden company. It is not possible to catch all the words in *The Wedding Bouquet* excerpts so that, as ever before, much of the witty point of this gay work is lost.

Some slight over-resonance in the recording occasionally clouds the texture of the sound, and in the *Rake* the canary whistle in the ballad is too far from the microphone; but the general quality is more than satisfactory.

Witty burlesque

Souvenirs—Ballet Suite (Barber). *The Age of Gold*—Ballet Suite (Shostakovitch). Philharmonia Orchestra (Efrem Kurtz). HMV BLP1080. 10in. 29*s.* 6½*d.*

SAMUEL BARBER wrote his ballet suite *Souvenirs* in 1952 for piano duet, later orchestrating the six movements—*Waltz, Scottische, Pas de Deux, Two-Step, Hesitation Tango* and *Galop-Coda*—for Todd Bolender's recent ballet of the same name for New York City Ballet. In depicting the amorous entanglements of guests at "the Hotel Plaza, New York" in the 1914 era, first seen waltzing sedately between the potted palms, Bolender was evidently concerned primarily with out-and-out burlesque. Barber's explicit aim, on the other hand, was an evocation of the popular dance music of the period: as he described it, "remembered with affection, not in irony or with the tongue in the cheek but in amused tenderness."

The result is first-rate ballet music that attractively blends gentle sentiment with witty sophistication, giving occasional reminders of the idoms of *Les Biches* and *Façade*.

The four dances from Shostakovitch's ballet music for Ivanovsky's *The Age of Gold*, a satire on "a capitalist city," make a shrewdly chosen coupling, the Russian composer's more exuberant wit acting as a perfect foil to the subtler manner of Barber. Both suites are given highly enjoyable performance under Kurtz, and brilliant recording.

Tchaikovsky classic

The Sleeping Beauty—excerpts (Tchaikovsky). André Kostelanetz and his Orchestra. Philips NBL5027. 12in. 33*s.* 11½*d.*

ANDRÉ KOSTELANETZ is more usually associated with slighter fare than *The Sleeping Beauty*, but do not be put off this record for that reason. Far from Tchaikovsky having been massacred to provide yet another holiday for strings, Kostelanetz's orchestra on this occasion is a fine one indeed, which, in many ways, runs rings round the sometime Covent Garden players. And, barring a tendency to whip up the excitement in moments of climax, such as at the end of the *Rose Adagio*, Kostelanetz conducts an eminently danceworthy performance, made all the more enjoyable by the fullness and depth of the recording.

The items played are given on the labels by their official titles as they are described in the score (the *Bluebird Pas de Deux*, for instance, is listed as a *Pas de Quatre*, in accordance with Petipa's original intention). It might have been more helpful to prospective buyers to give the dances the names by which they are now generally known in Western Europe from the Sadler's Wells production, which are as follows:

Side one: *Introduction*; *Entrance of Fairies* and *Dance of Maids of Honour*; *Fairies' Pas de Six*; *Dance of the Fairy of the Song Birds*; *Dance of the Fairy of the Golden Vine* (*Finger Variation*); *Garland Waltz*; *Rose Adagio*. Side two: *Panorama*; *Polonaise*; *Florestan and His Two Sisters—Entrée, Ballerinas' Variations* (*Silver* and *Gold*), and *Coda*; *Bluebird Pas de Deux*; *The Three Ivans*; *Mazurka* and *Apotheosis*.

Respighi's Birds

The Birds; *Trittico Botticelliano* (Respighi). Orchestra Alessandro Scarlatti (Franco Caracciolo). Columbia 33CX1354. 12in. 39*s.* 7½*d.*

The Birds; Second Suite of Ancient Airs and Dances (Respighi). Vienna State Opera Orchestra (Franz Litschauer). Vanguard PVL7025 12in. 39*s.* 7½*d.*

RESPIGHI'S delightful suite *The Birds*, arrangements of 17th- and 18th-century keyboard pieces, provided the music for Helpmann's ballet of the same name for Sadler's Wells, which was memorable for its beautiful setting by the Chinese painter Chiang Yee and for Moira Fraser's inimitably comic performance as the Hen.

Respighi wrote three suites of Ancient Airs and Dances, based on early lute music. Susan Salaman used the best-known Third Suite for her ballet *Our Lady's Juggler* for the Ballet Club at the Mercury Theatre in 1930. The Second Suite, now recorded for the first time on LP, makes very beguiling listening. But what a pity that the magnificently festive *Bergamasca* finale has been robbed of much of its character by substituting pianos for its two harpsichords. Even so, it still makes a splendid effect, and the Vanguard is almost worth its price for this dance alone.

The very beautiful *Botticelli Tripytch* was inspired by three of the painter's greatest masterpieces—*La Primavera, The Adoration of the Magi* and *The Birth of Venus*, all in the Uffizi Gallery in Florence—and is in Respighi's best imaginatively descriptive vein.

HARLEQUIN IN THE STREET. June Brae and Alan Carter in Ashton's ballet for the Wells to Couperin music, the Allegro from which is played on H.M.V's Wells Silver Jubilee record.

The playing is slightly more polished on the Columbia, which also has the benefit of a richer recorded sound. The Vanguard is nevertheless a very captivating disc; and its sleeve design, a gay Klee-like confection of a lute with birds, is a charming conceit.

Delibes Suites

Coppelia—Suite; *Sylvia*—Suite; *Naïla Valse* (Delibes). Philharmonic Promenade Orchestra (Sir Adrian Boult). Nixa NCL16009. 12in. 39*s.* 7½*d.*

Sylvia—Intermezzo; *Coppelia—Thème Slave Varié* (Delibes). *L'Arlésienne—Minuet* and *Carillon* (Bizet). Lamoureux Orchestra (Jean Fournet). Philips NBE11027. EP (45), 11*s.* 10*d.*

THE Nixa disc offers fine performances of what most people would agree to call the cream of Delibes' two most famous ballets, as well as the charming *Naïla Valse* which he wrote for a *Pas des Fleurs* divertissement that was inserted into a revival of the opera *Le Corsaire*, by his teacher Adolphe Adam, composer of *Giselle*.

The *Coppelia* suite consists of the *Prélude et Mazurka, Ballade de l'Epi, Thème Slave Varié, Scène et Valse de la Poupée, Czardas* and *Swanilda's Waltz*. The *Sylvia* items are *Prélude et Les Chasseresses, Intermezzo et Valse Lente, Pizzicati*, and *Cortège de Bacchus*.

Boult gives the music affectionate warmth and all the necessary springy lightness; and, except for some pre-echo, the brilliant recording will tell you all you need to know about "Hi-Fi," provided you have equipment worthy of it.

The Philips "Extended-Play" does not aspire to these flights of realism; reproduction here is of good average quality, and if you happen to want these four particular Delibes and Bizet pieces on one disc, you will find the well-played French performances excellent value.

B AND K GO BACKSTAGE: On April 25, Marshal Bulganin and Mr. Kruschev went to Covent Garden to see the ballet. They saw Fonteyn dancing in Le Lac des Cygnes *Act 2 and also Beryl Grey in* The Lady and the Fool. *After the performance the visiting Russians went back stage to meet the company and here they are between Fonteyn and Grey. They said that Fonteyn was "Wonderful! Wonderful!" and they found the antics of the clowns in Cranko's ballet highly amusing. They gave Fonteyn orchids and the rest of the company cigarettes, vodka and scent. Photo: The Times*

curtain up!

Gift from the Gods

IN all the words written and spoken in praise of the Sadler's Wells Ballet in celebrating their twenty-five years, one great contributing body has so far not been mentioned, a body without whose faithfulness and critical perception, the Wells might never have achieved what it has. The large section of the audience who have made up the gallery at Sadler's Wells Theatre, the New Theatre and at Covent Garden have exerted greater control over the destiny of our national company than many people imagine.

The gallery showed their appreciation of Dame Ninette de Valois' work by contributing a considerable sum of money so as to present her with a charming antique clock at the gala to celebrate the Wells Silver Jubilee on May 5.

After the performance at Covent Garden, which had been punctuated all the evening by cheers rivalling those heard on the same afternoon at the Cup Final, Dame Ninette made a speech in which she praised the people who had helped her to establish her great company. Many of these people she grouped under one "symbol", for to mention everyone by name would have kept the audience there until breakfast time the next morning. Some of the loudest cheering came after her mention of Madame Rambert's company and Anton Dolin's Festival Ballet, which proved how fair-minded the British public are.

Dame Ninette's speech was as gracious and sincere as her speeches always are. When she had finished, Frederick Ashton thanked her for all she had done for British ballet and then presented her with the clock "from the Gods to a Goddess."

Of all the galas held at Covent Garden this was undoubtedly the most delightful; a family atmosphere pervaded the performance as well as the intervals. The occasion will be reviewed in full in our next issue.

Sartorial improvement

TWENTY-FIVE years have done more than mature a company of dancers; the 25th Anniversary gala brought out the best-dressed audience seen at a ballet performance at Covent Garden for a long time. The most elegant were those dancers of the present company not taking part in the performance (there were more dancers in the audience than on the stage) and those who used to be members of the company. Everyone seemed to have put his or her best foot forward.

The lavish evening dresses were a far cry from the casual clothes worn in those early days in the Waterloo Road and Rosebery Avenue. The best-dressed of all was possibly Pamela May who later appeared with the rest of her company on the stage. Now the company have given the lead, the rest of the audience might follow suit.

Well hung

STAR of this year's Royal Academy (not the R.A.D.) is Dame Margot Fonteyn. Not content with appearing in the flat on canvas, she also appears in the round in bronze. The life-size bronze by Maurice Lambert, prominently displayed, is one of the most highly-praised exhibits; the portrait, in Panamanian dress, by Annigoni, the most violently criticised. It seems that portraits and statues of dancers are usually severely criticised more often by those interested in ballet than in painting or sculpture. Anyway they are bound to prove useful additions when exhibitions are organised to celebrate another quarter of a century of dance.

A dancer as Colette heroine

DANCERS have frequently starred in straight plays; Baronova, Zorina and Moira Shearer immediately come to mind. Usually they make a pretty good job of the, to them, less familiar medium. The latest recruit is Leslie Caron, now playing the title role in a stage version of Colette's short and enchanting story of the education of a *demi-mondaine-Gigi*. After a provincial tour the play opened in London at the New Theatre on May 23.

Like Moira Shearer, Caron has announced "definitely no more dancing." This is a pity as she was a charming artist. As a very young girl she scored her first success as the Sphinx in Lichine's ballet *La Rencôntre*, with wonderful Bérard designs and Sauguet music, for Les Ballets des Champs-Elysées. After appearing in other roles in that company's repertoire, she was induced by Gene Kelly to go into films. Starting with *An American in Paris* she now has a formidable list of film successes to her credit, the most recent being as a kind of Cinderella in *The Glass Slipper*. Her last appearance in ballet in London was when Roland Petit created a new work for her—*La Belle au Bois Dormant*—at the Stoll Theatre when his Ballets de Paris appeared there three years ago.

Franco-British associations

WHEN foreign companies appear in London, we imagine that most of the dancers have had little previous contact with England—not so some of the dancers in Roland Petit's Ballets de Paris. Veronika Mlakar, principal dancer in *La Chambre*, strange as it may seem, was Wells trained. Her father is a well-known ballet master in Yugoslavia.

Buzz Miller, the Jack Cole dancer who plays the principal male role in the same ballet, has previously danced in England at the Café de Paris. He was one of the three modern dancers to appear there with Kay Thompson in 1951. Since when he has appeared in several films—*On the Riviera, There's No Business Like Show Business* and in the new version of Cole Porter's *Anything Goes*—as well as in several Broadway musicals.

Another Wells trained dancer in the company is Ray Pointer. When he trained here it was impossible for him to get a working permit in England.

Experiment repeated

LAST year, the Association of Ballet Clubs held a most successful summer school which included lectures, film-shows and daily classes. This year the school will again be held in Bournemouth and the dates are from September 1 to 8. Lydia Kyasht and Claude Newman will be giving the classes. The fee for all this, including full board and lodging, is eight guineas. Those interested should contact Mr. L. A. Fortune, Vice-Chairman of the Association of Ballet Clubs, at 73 Old Park View, Enfield, Middlesex, without delay as accommodation may be limited.

Another theatre saved

THE Wimbledon Theatre has many associations with ballet. It is one of the few theatres in South London where it is possible to see ballet. Ballet Rambert, the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet, the New Ballet company, Metropolitan Ballet amongst others have given regular seasons there. In fact John Taras' *Designs with Strings* had its first London performance in that theatre.

Not long ago it was doomed as entertainment

tax was causing a heavy loss, and there seemed no alternative but to close down. Now owing to the generosity of local donations and of the forming of a theatre club, the theatre has been reprieved. Well done, Wimbledon! Let us hope that the public rallies to make this venture a resounding success.

Timely programme

THE B.B.C. television programme of the Royal Opera House was postponed originally owing to the musicians' dispute. When that was settled and the programme was finally given on April 22, it came at a more opportune moment. The prices of seats at Covent Garden had just been raised and the programme, which was extraordinarily popular, possibly acted as a boost to public interest.

The Gores in Holland

WALTER GORE and his wife, Paula Hinton, certainly move about the globe. A few months ago they were working in Australia, now they are back in Europe for a time at any rate. But they are not working in England. Recently Paula Hinton scored a great success when she danced the title role in *Giselle* at the Amsterdam Opera. The critics all praised her for her dramatic gifts and for her lightness and technique. Some years ago she made a remarkable Queen of the Wilis when she danced with London's Festival Ballet. No doubt watching other ballerinas, as she has to in the second act of *Giselle*, has contributed a certain amount to her present interpretation of the principal role.

While his wife dances, Walter Gore is busy choreographing a new work in Holland. His ballet, a dramatic work to Sibelius music, will have its world premiere by the Nederlands Ballet at the opening of the spring festival in The Hague on June 22.

happy birthday to...

		June
John Chesworth	Ballet Rambert	22
Thelma Litster	Ballet Rambert	22
Lilla Popper	American Ballet Theatre	22
Vernon Wendorf	American Ballet Theatre	24
Christopher Newton	Sadler's Wells Ballet	24
Celia Franca	Canadian National Ballet	25
Brian Shaw	Sadler's Wells Ballet	28
Ivan Allen	American Ballet Theatre	29
Michel Resnikoff	De Cuevas Grand Ballet	30
Valerie Taylor	Sadler's Wells Ballet	30
		July
Leslie Caron	in play, *Gigi*	1
John Hart	Sadler's Wells Ballet	4
Igor Schwezoff	Teacher in New York	4
Leo Duggan	American Ballet Theatre	5
Victor Duret	Royal Winnipeg Ballet	11
Anita Landa	Festival Ballet	14
Vanda Intini	Canadian National Ballet	15
Patricia Wilde	New York City Ballet	16
Joan Cadzow	Dancing in Paris	17
April Olrich	Dancing in musicals	17
Daphne Dale	Dancing in Kenya	18
Beatrice Mosena	Ballets de Paris	19
David Paltenghi	Filming	20
Anne Negus	Teaching in London	21
Angela Bailey	Dancing in Holland	22
Julia Farron	Sadler's Wells Ballet	22
Hermione Harvey	Dancing in revue	25

Dancer of To-day

BRYAN ASHBRIDGE

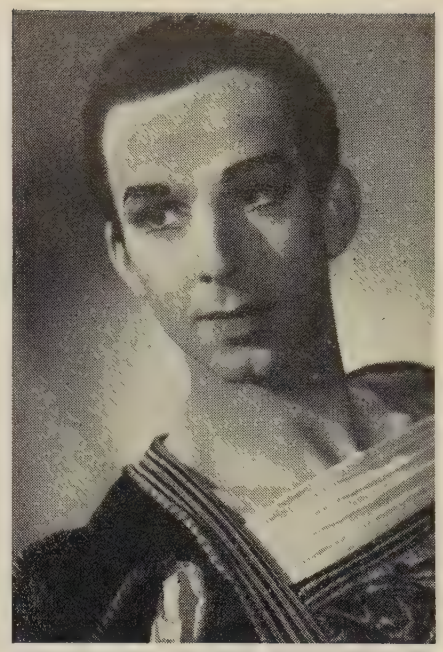


Photo: Houston Rogers

BORN in Wellington, New Zealand. Started to dance at the age of 9 *under Joseph Knowsley in Wellington; went to Sydney in* 1938 *and studied with Frances Sculley, Dolin, Kirsova and Borovansky. In* 1939, *at the age of* 13, *he toured Australia with the De Basil company. When the war came he was too young to continue touring and he returned to New Zealand and went back to school; here he became Junior High Jump Champion of New Zealand. On leaving school he served in the New Zealand Air Force. He came to England in* 1947 *and, although he had not taken a ballet class since* 1939, *was taken straight into the Sadler's Wells School. The same year he won the Adeline Genée Gold Medal, and appeared as a soloist in the film* Red Shoes. *In March* 1948 *he joined the Sadler's Wells Ballet, and was appointed a soloist in* 1951. *In May* 1954 *he danced with Rowena Jackson at the Auckland Festival, New Zealand.*

Creations: Shadow in The Shadow; *Gondolier in* Veneziana; *Fire* Pas de Quatre *in* Homage to the Queen; Birthday Offering.

Roles: Cavalier, First Prince, Florestan, and King in The Sleeping Beauty; *Duke in* Giselle; *Consort to Queen of the Waters in* Homage to the Queen; *White Skater in* Les Patineurs; *Young Husband in* Don Juan; *Cavalier in* Cinderella; Scènes de Ballet; Pas de Deux *in* Ballabile; *Black Knight in* Checkmate; *Fencing Master in* The Rake's Progress; Pas de Trois *in Ballet Imperial*; *Officer in* Mam'zelle Angot.

TECHNICALLY Bryan Ashbridge is among the most accomplished performers of his type that British ballet has yet produced. In the *corps de ballet* his dancing has always been strong, accurate and vigorous, but until comparatively recently he was disappointing in solo roles. His performance, for example, in the Florestan *pas de trois* a few years ago lacked nothing so much as confidence, and it seemed as though Ashbridge was to settle down as an extremely competent dancer of the *corps de ballet*.

However, a tour of New Zealand with his compatriot, Rowena Jackson, gave him the opportunity to dance a number of testing roles. The confidence he gained by this experience soon began to make itself felt on his return, but it was not until he had had a considerable success as the Consort to the Queen of the Waters in *Homage to the Queen* that he appeared completely at home on stage. Later he acted two important mime roles the Duke in *Giselle* and the King in *The Sleeping Beauty* with genuine authority and straightforward sincerity.

This season he has been seen in a wide variety of parts, some calling for virtuoso dancing, others demanding nothing but stage presence, and in all of them he has been consistently excellent. His career to date has been crowned with the opportunity to dance with the cream of British ballet in *Birthday Offering*. Versatile and experienced, with an unassuming authority and craftsmanlike skill, hard work has matured him into an invaluable soloist. Ashbridge is never going to be a great dancer, but he is the kind of dancer essential to a great company.

NEXT MONTH

READERS who did not see the announcement in our April issue will no doubt realise by now that the price of DANCE AND DANCERS has been raised to 2s. The ever-increasing cost of paper and printing has compelled us, with much reluctance, to do this.

However, we promised at the time that we would increase the size of DANCE AND DANCERS so as to give even wider coverage of dance events at home and abroad, together with a greater number of pictures. This we have done and we feel sure that our readers will agree that the new enlarged issues are excellent value.

After the complications arising out of the recent printing dispute, it has been difficult to catch up and bring the magazine out on its usual publication date. But the July issue DANCE AND DANCERS will be on sale on June 20.

LOOK FOR

The Festival Ballet picture on the green cover of the July DANCE AND DANCERS.

Also in this number will be the conclusion of the story of Sadler's Wells Ballet—SADLER'S WELLS SILVER JUBILEE by CLIVE BARNES. BIRTHDAY GALA including pictures and opinion of Ashton's *Birthday Offering* created specially for the occasion. Pictures and opinion of recent creations by BALLET THEATRE by ARTHUR TODD. *Good Theatre or Ballet?*, a review of the season of Roland Petit's Ballets de Paris by PETER WILLIAMS. More American Modern Dance Choreographers by DAVID VAUGHAN. First news of the ROYAL DANISH BALLET FESTIVAL by Peter Williams, who is going to Copenhagen to review the season.

All the usual features and many topical ones, together with a great number of pictures. On sale June 20.

NIGHT JOURNEY: *Martha Graham's powerful work based on the Oedipus legend, which David Vaughan considers to be one of her best creations. The designing is by Isamu Noguchi and the music by William Schuman.*
Graham herself, as Jocasta, is seen lying in the background. Photo: Bennett and Pleasant

Transatlantic View: 2

Modern Dance Choreography in America

By DAVID VAUGHAN

Last month, David Vaughan, a young British dancer and choreographer who has worked and studied in America, wrote about American choreography with a basis in the classical. Now he turns to one of the most stimulating and controversial features of the American dance scene—Modern Dance choreography.

WHEN I first went to America one of the things I was most curious about was the modern dance. Particularly, of course, I was curious to see the legendary figures, Martha Graham, José Limon, and the rest. I had a feeling, I think, that nothing in my experience could help me to imagine even vaguely what their dancing could look like—not Audrey de Vos' modern classes, not the Ballets Jooss, not even American importations like the Dunham company, *Oklahoma*! or *Finian's Rainbow*; although I knew that Dunham, de Mille, and Kidd were all choreographers who had been deeply influenced by Graham and the other moderns.

Five years and heaven knows how many modern dance recitals later I have to confess that my appetite for this kind of entertainment is now somewhat jaded. I do not think that I can be accused of being basically antagonistic to modern dance—I do not suffer from the form of myopia common among English critics and known, I believe, as "ballet focus." But in modern dance more than any other art it is true that the mediocre is the enemy of the good, and that most of what you see is not even mediocre.

Unfortunately I was not able to see Graham or Limon until I had been in New York for some time, but I had not been there a week before I saw some girls from a progressive college perform a work that could be described adequately only by a satirist of the order of S. J. Perelman. One soon discovers that there is so much dancing going on in the United States that a great deal of it is bound to be of indifferent quality—on the other hand, of course, every so often something exceptional does turn up.

What follows is inevitably, therefore, a partial and somewhat disenchanted backward glance at the modern dance in America over the last five years. It is hardly necessary, I suppose, at this stage to trace its origins in Isadora Duncan, through Denishawn, and so on. In any case I can write only of what I saw, and I did not see everything. To impose some kind of order on the chaotic confusion of the modern dance scene is impossible without fairly drastic simplification. It is difficult to break the modern dancers down into schools because, almost by definition, every modern dancer is his or her (especially her) own choreographer, and every choreographer his or her own school. The dance recitals bristle with solos in which boys and girls of immature emotional and intellectual development dance out their neuroses.

This is not to say that ballet choreographers are not also thus immature. These usually betray themselves by insisting on attempting themes of philosophical profundity that when danced become merely absurd; good-and-evil ballets, conflict-between-Man-and-his-Fate ballets (usually resolved by the arrival of a girl in white, His Ideal Love; she points at the dancer representing Fate, who retires sheepishly towards the wings). In dance the most profound concepts may best be expressed through the most simple themes—just as a painting by Bonnard of some fruit on a table tells us more about life than Watts' allegorical representation of Truth as "a disconsolate young woman sitting on an association football."

I will bring this digression to an end by observing that this is one reason why *Daphnis and Chloë* is a great ballet and *Tiresias* only a grandiose one; errors of judgment are committed by mature choreographers too.

One is more aware of the immaturity of Modern choreographers because there are more of them. The possibility that there are some people who are meant to be dancers, and some who are meant to be choreographers, which is a fact of life in ballet, never enters the head of most modern dancers—they all have to "express" themselves. This means that one is frequently very embarrassed by modern dance performances. The things happening on stage, in spite of the obscure titles in the programme (modern dancers, I am afraid, are addicted to titles like . . . *and the wind*), are so very private, so nakedly personal, that you feel you should not be watching at all. More often even than embarrassment comes simple boredom, for in spite of this insistence on individuality it turns out that most immature people have very similar problems, and make very similar dances about them.

The modern dance, moreover, provides a soil in which the phoney and the intellectually pretentious thrive; and it is also true that this is in a way implicit in the whole aesthetic basis of the art. We hear a great deal these days about the dangers of the cult of personality, and this cult is dangerous in dance no less than in politics.

The great figures of the modern dance so far have all been extraordinary individuals who have left nothing behind them because what they did was completely their own and could be done by no one else. Strictly speaking there is not even such a thing as modern dance

EVERY SOUL IS A CIRCUS: *Graham in a contrasting mood. Here she presents a mordant, satirical portrait of an empty-headed woman.*

Photo: Bennett and Pleasant

TWO WORKS BY LIMON (*left*): The Moor's Pavane *with Jose Limon and Lucas Hoving. Photo: Walter Strate*

(*Right*): *Pauline Koner and Jose Limon in* The Visitation. *Both works are discussed on page* 37. *Photo: Peter Basch*

technique, only a lot of different *styles* evolved by individual dancers to express their own personalities: the style and the expression, that is to say, *are* the technique, and are, of course, subjective—yet a subjective technique is a contradiction in terms. What is taught by most dancers in so-called "technique" classes (apart from the warm-ups) was originally, or is intended to become, sequences from dances, and these are coloured by the emotional content of those dances and can scarcely be executed without reference to it. I suspect that this is the reason why modern dance often seems to be a sanctioned form of self-indulgence: modern dancers are, to some extent encouraged to perform in class and to absorb the teacher's mannerisms, and this often results in a disagreeable lack of reticence, a kind of sentimentality, on the stage.

I believe, then, that there are certain fundamental flaws in the aesthetic premises of the modern dance, and that these flaws are to be detected in some of the work of the greatest practitioners: it is the measure of their greatness that they are able to make us overlook them. To put it another way: in an art that exists to exhibit the individual personality, the performer has to have a personality that is worth exhibiting.

Introduction to Graham

IT was, as I have said, not until some time after my arrival in the United States that I first saw Martha Graham dance (I had watched her teach a class). This was in a long solo called *Judith*. Even though by this time I had seen some more or less poor imitations of her work, I found the real thing quite as strange as I had imagined. The changes of the body silhouette were often so sudden and violent that the movement was difficult to read, as it were. I also have to confess that there were moments when I wanted to giggle. To this day there are moments in Graham's dances in which the expressive idiom seems to me extreme, when she crosses the line between the intense and the ludicrous. I hasten to say that this is not an exclusively English reaction. An American friend of mine told me that towards the end of one of Graham's seasons he had to leave in the middle of a performance to go to another theatre when Danilova was dancing *Coppelia*, to restore his sense of proportion.

It was perhaps unfortunate that I should have been introduced to Graham's work through a solo. She has been able to triumph over the implicit aesthetic unbalance of modern dance partly because her works are so splendidly theatrical, with exciting group choreography and magnificent decor. Her costumes are not always so happy, and her choice of composer is less often successful.

In fact another general complaint I have against modern dance choreographers is that their attitude to music is often contemptuous. They "use" music far more ruthlessly even than ballet choreographers. A modern dancer will think nothing of setting a dance to a mish-mash of movements from Bartók quartets (of all composers, Bartók is the most "okay" name). But even Bach will not make them dance any differently—chiefly because modern dancers do not dance to the music but to counts. It is not unusual for the dancers in a modern piece to rehearse to counts and hear the music for the first time at one of the last rehearsals. This explains why, whereas in ballet the music provides what Balanchine, in a beautiful phrase, calls "a floor for the dance to walk on," in modern dance the music all too often seems to be like a padded cell against whose walls the dance occasionally hurls itself.

It is a pity, I think, that Graham, who had the genius to commission the first theatrical designs from the Japanese sculptor Isamu Noguchi, has not set a better example to younger choreographers in this matter of music. The principle by which we judge a ballet as a work of art remains valid for modern dance—that the choreography, the music, and the decor should all be of equal importance in the total effect. Most of Graham's works do not stand up to this criterion because what usually comes first in importance in them is her performance, then the group choreography, then the staging, and last of all the music. To my mind her most successful work, for this reason, is *Appalachian Spring*, in which the choreography, Copland's score (his best dance music), and Noguchi's set combine to make a whole in which no element could be replaced except to the detriment of the others. Significantly, this is also the dance of Graham's that loses least when she does not dance the central role.

Of course she has choreographed several dances for her company in which she does not appear, such as the serenely beautiful *Diversion of Angels* and *Canticle for Innocent Comedians*. With these, and with others of her best works, among which I would name *Night Journey*, *Dark Meadow* and *Letter to the World*, London audiences are by now at least as familiar as I am. The one work of hers that I cannot abide at any price is *Deaths and Entrances*, with its heavy and tedious symbolism. Others, like *Hérodiade* and *Cave of the Heart*, I find unapproachable. Perhaps the facet of her talent that I most admire is her extraordinary, and too rarely seen, gift for comedy—the almost Chaplinesque comic moments in *Letter to the World* and the mordant satirical portrait of an empty-headed woman in *Every Soul is a Circus*.

Influence on the theatre

Of works that have not been given in this country, I have not seen the reworked version of *Voyage*. In its original form this bore a rather disconcerting resemblance to that dance we are all so tired of seeing on television in which a beautiful and expensively-dressed woman expresses her boredom with the attentions of three young men in evening dress who prostrate themselves in front of her.

Seraphic Dialogue, last year's new work, in which Graham did not dance, was a beautifully achieved piece. It is a dance about Saint Joan. Graham had earlier performed a solo on this subject that I did not see—the new dance uses the same music, which sounds, characteristically, like the incidental music for an historical movie. But the choreography and the decor just about transcend the banality of the accompaniment. Different facets of Joan's character are each represented by a different dancer: Mary Hinkson as the warrior and Matt Turney as the martyr being outstanding, as they always are. Noguchi's set, made of brass wire, is one of the most beautiful things I have ever seen.

There is no doubt, I think, that whatever reservations one may have about her in theory, dancing can never be the same after Martha Graham. Nor, if it comes to that, can the theatre as a whole. No one can have seen a programme of her works without noticing her bold and imaginative use of properties, for instance: this can sometimes, it is true, come dangerously near a kind of fetichism, or produce a symbol as literary and elementary as the business with the umbilical cord in *Night Journey*, or be just a gimmick, but at its most telling it has produced such an extraordinary *coup de théâtre* as the magical final moment of *Cave of the Heart*, when she steps into and assumes as a kind of garment the glittering bush-like structure that forms part of Noguchi's setting.

(*continued on page 37*)

PAS DE DEUX: Margot Fonteyn and Michael Somes in the Aurora pas de deux *from the last act of* The Sleeping Beauty *given on television.*

THE BLUE BIRDS: Rowena Jackson and Brian Shaw in the same television performance from the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. Photos: BBC

Gala Occasions

Soirée de Gala

Festival Ballet and the Paris Opéra Ballet on Eurovision from the Opera House, Monte Carlo, on April 13.

ETUDES

Choreography by Harold Lander. Music by Riisager (after Czerny).

TONI LANDER JOHN GILPIN
FLEMMING FLINDT
KENNETH MELVILLE
and London's Festival Ballet

VARIATIONS

Choreography by Serge Lifar. Music, Schubert.

MADELEINE LAFON
YVETTE CHUVIRÉ
JOSETTE AMIEL NINA VYROUBOVA

HOW many of us have seen classical ballet—a delicate adjustment of many ingredients on the stage—wilt, more often than not, on our television screens? Not surprisingly, therefore, many have expressed the view that classical ballet is altogether too fragile a medium to be transmitted from an actual stage performance.

The recent gala programme from the Monte Carlo Opera House demolished once and for all this theory. No alterations whatever were made in this case to adapt or edit the ballets for television. Yet little of the excitement of the performance evaporated. It must be admitted, however, that all the principal dancers were excellent, that the music was played by a full orchestra and sounded as if it was in a theatre, and that spontaneous applause at right moments from an enthusiastic audience helped maintain the atmosphere.

The ballets themselves were both very much white against black, and ingeniously lit. Not at all like the usual Albrechts or Siegfrieds, so grey that you have trouble seeing them at all. The transmission was amazingly free from distortion. If anything, however, Festival Ballet's *Etudes* was the more successful but, regrettably, the last solo of *Variations* was rudely interrupted to make way for the news.

Etudes is extremely original and rich in choreographic invention. The attack and speed of the dancers, particularly of Gilpin and Lander, was exhilarating and dazzling, and every dancer was seen to advantage. One of the factors which go to make this particular ballet an ideal one for television is that it does not require changes of mood from the dancers and, therefore, close-ups are unnecessary.

TELEVISION
Reviewed by E. C. MASON

The Paris Opéra Ballet's *Variations* is a series of soli for the *danseuses étoiles*, and it is neither a *Les Sylphides* to the music of Schubert nor a sequence of spectacular exhibition pieces. The dancers appear singly before black curtains which part towards the end of each solo to reveal the next dancer waiting. Although in style it is somewhat academic and austere, it does afford ideal opportunities for the dancers to display their technical ability. Chauviré, with beautifully controlled movements, was the most impressive, but it did seem to me that hers was the most rewarding and interesting variation.

Variations also demonstrated the fact that Lifar, who once wanted to free ballet from the tyranny of music, is a more musical chroeographer and possibly a much better choreographer than many people would care to admit.

The Sadler's Wells Ballet

AURORA'S WEDDING

Given on BBC Television on April 29. Choreography, Petipa, adapted for television by Frederick Ashton. Music, Tchaikovsky. Decor and Costumes by Oliver Messel. The Covent Garden Orchestra conducted by Robert Irving. Television presentation by Margaret Dale.

Princess Aurora	MARGOT FONTEYN
Prince Florimund	MICHAEL SOMES
Lilac Fairy	BERYL GREY
Cattalabutte	LESLIE EDWARDS
The King	BRIAN ASHBRIDGE
The Queen	PAMELA MAY
Florestan	PHILIP CHATFIELD
His Two Sisters	JULIA FARRON
	ROSEMARY LINDSAY
Puss-in-Boots	DOUGLAS STEUART
The White Cat	DOROTHEA ZAYMES
The Blue Birds	ROWENA JACKSON
	BRIAN SHAW
Red Riding Hood	ANGELA WALTON
The Wolf	FRANKLIN WHITE
The Three Ivans	ALEXANDER GRANT
	RAY POWELL
	PETER CLEGG

and Full Company

THE "cult of personality" is an expression which has been heard a great number of times in past weeks. Yet one cannot help noting that personality is what an incredibly large number of celebrities on TV lack most. Michael Somes, as host, was not at all discomforted by the television camera. When I first saw Somes I thought how splendid he looked, and it also occurred to me that he would not seem at all out of place on the Old Vic stage. Now that I know he has an agreeable voice this thought does not seem quite so far-fetched.

While he was showing us over Covent Garden, the ante-rooms and view from the Royal Box, Edward VII's smoking-room, the scene docks, the wardrobe and even the new canteen, or telling us about the theatre's history, illustrated with old engravings, he revealed a most engaging television personality. But by far the most important piece of information given in the introduction is that for the first time in its history the theatre is playing for up to 11 months of the year, and is thereby playing a much greater part in London's cultural life than ever before.

Apart from the fact that it was with *The Sleeping Beauty* that the theatre re-opened after the war, it is difficult to imagine a more appropriate or ambitious work to commemorate the re-opening. The artists rose to the occasion and the dancing was flawless. But two factors spoiled what could have been a perfect programme.

Red Riding Hood and the Wolf did not come over well. Small trees got in the way of both cameras and artists, and the finale seemed to be too much of a huddle and muddle for anything to be seen clearly. Moreover, on a number of occasions the dancers tended to blend into the scenery, but this is something we are beginning to take for granted on TV.

At most times the presentation was imaginative. A clever touch to highlight and clarify the ending and, at the same time, rescue it from a jumble of moving bodies, was to have Aurora and her Prince walking very slowly towards the camera through a guard of honour

of the assembled company. One of the finest moments was the arrival of the guests (each with sub-title) who were presented to us just as if we were standing behind the throne.

It is hard, though not impossible, to detect dancing at its best on television. Those who came over best and certainly seemed to be dancing at their best were Beryl Grey, in the Lilac Fairy variation from the Prologue, Philip Chatfield, rather cramped by lack of space as Florestan, Rowena Jackson and Brian Shaw as the Blue Birds, and Margot Fonteyn and Michael Somes, both in their variations and their brilliantly executed *grand pas de deux*.

It has now been proved time and again that we must have producers who are thoroughly experienced in every possible aspect of ballet and who know at the same time just what are the capacities of a TV camera. Margaret Dale, the producer, has all the requisites for the first, and when her knowledge of the mechanics of television (already considerable) catches up with her knowledge of ballet, we should have some very fine programmes indeed.

ETUDES: Flemming Flindt and John Gilpin in the finale of Harald Lander's Etudes *which Festival Ballet gave at the wedding gala in Monte Carlo. The performance was televised and seen all over Europe and was generally considered to have been one of the best "live" performances of ballet ever televised.*

Photo: Lido

Dance and Dancers . . . . AT HOME

SADLER'S WELLS BALLET

Fonteyn in *Symphonic Variations*

IF there is any truth in rumour, then the performance on April 4 was an historic one. Fonteyn danced in a revival of Ashton's *Symphonic Variations*, and it is said that she will not be dancing in this ballet any more. Personally I feel this to be a great tragedy because this ballet needs her desperately and in a curious way she needs it. She needs it because the ballet affords a unique opportunity for a great ballerina to dance almost the same things as her two surrounding ballerinas while still remaining the central figure. However, rumour may still be the usual lying jade and we may see Fonteyn for many more years in this fine work.

The two other dancers were Rosemary Lindsay and Anya Linden. The three made the best combination I can remember seeing in this work, though some of the placing on the stage, on this particular occasion, was rather off the mark. If there are only to be six persons on a large stage, the way they are placed becomes of great importance if the stage is not to look empty. This Ashton had always achieved in a masterly fashion; the floor pattern was so good that there never appeared to be empty spaces. No doubt with more rehearsals the balance would again be achieved.

Of the three boys—Somes, Shaw and Pirmin Trecu—the latter was dancing in the ballet for the first time, and shaped well without being obtrusive. Shaw, who first sprang to fame in this ballet several years ago, danced his short variation brilliantly.

The boys all suffer from costumes which amount to some of the most unfortunate that a male dancer has ever been forced to wear. For Sophie Fedorovitch, who created the finest settings and costumes in British ballet, I shall always have an almost fanatical regard, but the upper part of these costumes are a mistake which, were she still alive, she would no doubt put right. The half-shirt leaving one side of the torso naked would be all right for slender bronzed foreign dancers; on white, hirsute and more noticeably muscular British dancers the effect is unhappy and detracts from the pleasure of the ballet as a whole. As some glittering headpieces have already been discarded from the original design it would not be too sacrilegious to restore the other half of these shirts.

The final ballet on this programme, which was also historic for the fact that Mr. Malenkov and most of the Russian Embassy were present, was de Valois' *Job* with Alexander Grant in the role of Satan.

Grant makes a very athletic and bouncy fallen angel, not beautiful and evil like Dolin or beastly and evil like Helpmann. His is quite a new interpretation and the evil comes through his sheer animal vitality. Oddly enough he fails to dominate the stage as did his two most notable predecessors, though no doubt this was more due to lack of acquaintance with the work than anything else. He would do better to refrain from any facial contortions, as all expression can come though his body.

Although this distinguished British work seems a little slow to us today, it is still a ballet which has its place in our history and also in the Wells repertoire. I do not feel the John Piper designs are any improvement on the original Blake reconstructions of Gwen Raverat, but Vaughan Williams' score has a Biblical nobility which always makes the ballet a moving experience.

Mr. Malenkov, apparently, found the work as moving as we originally did when it was first created in 1931. There may be some moral here—or there may not!

Odette with Grandeur

TWO months ago I wrote about the first occasion that Philip Chatfield danced Prince Siegfried with Svetlana Beriosova's Odette-Odile in *Le Lac des Cygnes*. The performance on April 14 afforded an opportunity to see how these two had matured.

Beriosova's second act now offers some of the most beautiful dancing I have seen in several months of exciting performances. Her *adage* is near-faultless, lyrical with that underlying strength that used to be the hallmark of great Russian ballerinas of the past. The placing of her head, the way her arms entwine her cavalier, the line of her whole body from her finger tips to her toes; all add up to a memorable performance.

In the third act she came rather unstuck in the *fouettés* which was surprising as in the previous performance she had appeared to have mastered these 32 nightmares. But what was outstanding about this act was her variation which has previously been unsatisfactory in Wells' productions. She gave it grandeur and she was much slower on her turns, more like Hightower, so that the whole dance had greater breadth. There has always been a tendency at Covent Garden to rush this solo and it thus becomes insignificant. This interpretation could be watched by everyone to their advantage. Beriosova has emerged as a superb *adagio* dancer; her *allegro* work now needs more attention.

All through, Chatfield partnered excellently and his variation in the third act, if lacking the panache of foreign dancers, was a fine example of the correct, perfectly-placed British School which we prefer in this country. He is an intelligent mime, though I feel that in the opening scene he moves too quickly. He enters with a heartiness that seems unsuited to a romantic prince. Now that he puts so much into his mime, he should start to eliminate superfluous movements and retains only those that are going to tell theatrically. He will then achieve greater projection.

Elvin's Busy Season

FOR Violetta Elvin the last few months have indeed been busy. She has given some splendid performances as Odette-Odile in *Le Lac des Cygnes* and she has been partnered with increasing maturity by David Blair as Prince Siegfried. In him she has found the partner that she has long needed. For a few years Elvin has not been giving the performances of which her early appearances with the company gave promise. This season, apart from a first appearance as Princess Aurora in *The Sleeping Beauty*, she has shown a very marked improvement all round and has more than regained her former position.

Taking over the part at very short notice, Elvin danced the title role in Fokine's *The Firebird* on March 27. The lack of time for preparation obviously detracted from a fully-rounded interpretation, and it should be remembered that when Fonteyn first gave this role she had worked for several months with its creator, Tamara Karsavina. It would be difficult for any dancer to equal Fonteyn's wonderful performance in this part, but Elvin in no way let the ballet down. She was more woman than bird and underplayed the quick, frightened, darting movements. In the *pas de deux* with Somes, which is really the dancing

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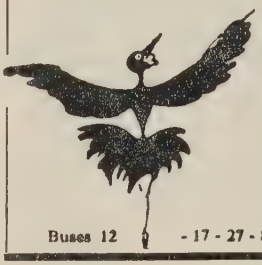

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pinnacle of the whole ballet, she gave a splendid account of herself. When I say that she never let the ballet down it is really higher praise than might at first appear. In this ballet every role is so perfectly integrated in the whole that nothing stands out so much as the completeness of Fokine's narrative fairy-tale, and if one of the principals is less than excellent the gripping power of the ballet is automatically loosened. *The Firebird* continues to be one of the most perfect of the Wells revivals. **P.W.**

Beriosova's *Giselle*

SVETLANA BERIOSOVA, the fifth Giselle, gave her first performance of the role on April 20. Although she danced the second act as long ago as 1949, when she was with the Metropolitan Ballet, she had never before appeared in the complete work.

Technically the problem for Giselle is to dance with both the artlessness of a peasant and the artistry of a ballerina. The combination is difficult and, in fact, a young immature dancer, cleverly produced, can often come closer to the character than a ballerina. Although bad Giselles are curiously rare, good Giselles are rarer still, and it is pleasant to record that Beriosova even at this first attempt was astonishingly successful.

Her first act had an unforced charm and vivacity, together with an apparently sure sense of period. Her mad scene was simple, sincere and tender. During this scene at one point she made cradling movements with her arms, a beautiful touch, new I think to my generation, although I seem to recall something similar in the film of Spessiva's interpretation.

The spectral sadness of her Wili seemed perfectly attuned to her first act. Presumably in time her dancing in this Act, which was perhaps a little less satisfying than in its predecessor, will acquire more finesse, but I personally doubt whether she could ever achieve a more complete degree of emotional identification. If this fine performance was merely the first sketch of what is to come later, then it is undoubtedly the sketch of a great Giselle.

If Beriosova's was the sketch of a great Giselle, then Chatfield's was the sketch of a great Albrecht. This was already a distinct improvement on the promising account of the role he had given earlier when partnering Grey. He acted the part as convincingly as Helpmann, and danced nearly as well as Somes or Blair. His elevation (with no bumping worth mentioning) was outstanding in the last act, but the abiding impression left by his performance was from his direct, well-considered and, most important, natural acting. He is one of those few British dancers who seem to make classical mine a living tradition. **C.A.B.**

Linden in Fonteyn Role

EVEN though quite a few dancers have attempted Fonteyn's role in *Symphonic Variations*, none has yet succeeded in replacing her. Not only does the part call for considerable technical skill (it is appreciably more difficult than the roles created by May and Shearer), but it also demands unusual musical sensitivity. Fonteyn contrives to give this part an air of dedication; she is a withdrawn goddess going through a secret celestial ritual with grave deliberation, while in the ballet's *finale* she generates a feeling of liberated joy. Some such emotional undercurrent is essential to the ballet's expression, and without it the work becomes as cold as charity, if rather more graceful. An anonymous nonentity is so different from an anonymous goddess.

Anya Linden, Fonteyn's most recent successor in *Symphonic Variations*, gave at her first performance a chaste portrayal, neatly danced yet fundamentally undistinguished. In some ways this was Miss Linden's most difficult assignment to date, and it may well be that in time she will be able to make the ballet personal to herself. Linden's place among the two supporting graces was taken by Annette Page, who danced sweetly and with commendable warmth. In the same performance Somes gave a particularly spirited account of the leading male role. **C.A.B.**

DANCES OF INDONESIA

Presented at the French Institute on April 16 by the Asian Music Circle.

IN such a short programme it was impossible to do more than suggest the richness of the Indonesian dance heritage. The dances presented were charming folk dances of simple stylised movements, and not the famous Javanese and Balinese dances which have so often been referred to as the classical dances of Indonesia. The music was recorded and mainly composed of the percussion instruments which form their gamelan orchestra.

All the dances were interesting, but the two most enjoyable were a Courting Dance from the Celebes, in which a young man seeks the love of a girl while other boys and girls clap hands to encourage him, and the Umbrella Dance from Sumatra in which several couples vie with each other for the honours of the dance.

Dr. Raden Moerdowo of the Indonesian Embassy introduced the dances and stressed the fact that the artists were all amateurs. But throughout the dances there was a little too much shyness and timidity. This may have enhanced the charm of the delicate, fragile girls, but it naturally diminished the part the boys had to play in the courting dances.

All this went to prove that Eastern dance, like Western dance, is better performed by professionals, and that Eastern dancers also need considerable practice and rehearsal if they are not to lack the balance and control their art requires. It would, however, be pleasant to see this group again with a better stage direction. **E.C.M.**

DANCE LECTURES

Dances of Yugoslavia

A lecture given by Maria Zybina at the School of Russian Ballet, Chelsea, on April 15.

THE most remarkable feature of this lecture was the genuine enthusiasm of the audience. Very little coaxing was needed when Maria Zybina invited those present to take part. Chairs were hurriedly moved aside and at least 30 members of the audience linked hands behind her in the *Kolo*.

For some years Madame Zybina was a soloist with the Belgrade State Ballet and in charge of its school. She gave us some idea of the richness of Yugoslav folk dance when she stated that for one festival there were 700 different entries, all with different costumes and accompaniments. Most of the dances are performed by the men; the girls' dances are mainly *à terre*, although frequently they merely stand at the sides and sing. As expected, it is in the less accessible regions, such as the mountains of Montenegro, that we find the dances most likely to be preserved in their original state, and free from outside influences.

Fifteen of her pupils gave examples of the intricate and lively footwork with an impressive precision. Also given were excerpts from two Yugoslav ballets, *The Devil in the Village* and the Lake Dance from *The Okhrid Legend*.

This was certainly the most enjoyable of the series of lectures arranged by John Gregory and Barbara Vernon, and a very happy choice for the last lecture. These lectures are a splendid idea, and it is to be hoped that they will be encouraged to prepare a new series for the autumn. **E.C.M.**

Dance and Dancers . . . ABROAD

FRANCE

ROSARIO'S SPANISH BALLET

AFTER more than two years absence, Rosario has returned to the Théâtre de l'Étoile, where a warm welcome awaited her. As in her last season, her programme brought together the same qualities—intelligence, rhythm and harmony. Rejecting the rather facile effects to which Antonio sometimes has recourse, Rosario makes up for a relative lack of warmth with a delicate sense of acting and a more reserved charm. Her features are still classically pure and serene, her gestures still elegant.

She is surrounded by a young company in which freshness and enthusiasm are more to the fore than skill, and again at her side is Juan Alba, whose slender figure still possesses an adolescent gaucherie. Mention must also be made of the graceful Nieves de Juan, the brilliant Juan Quintero, and the assured Miguel Sandoval.

While her programme is devoted particularly to Andalusian Flamenco folk lore, with *Malaguena, Triana, Por Cana* and *Anda Jalero*, a place is also found for the classical Spanish School with a suite of *Boleros*. With Juan Alba Rosario dances with great spirit a Jewish song of the 15th century, *Dieguito Leon*, as well as two Argentinian dances, *Zamba* and *Gato*, in which both handkerchiefs and spins play an important part.

The ballet, *Sortilége de la lune*, suffers a little from the lack of depth of the stage of the Thtéâre de l'Étoile. As sets are obviously cramped and movemtnt restricted, it is difficult to pass a valid judgment on this attempt at a *ballet d'action*. The programme ends on a traditional note with the Sevillian *Café del Burrero*, accompanied by the guitarists, Juan Garcia de la Mata and Rafael de Jerez. The costumes are well blended, but the lighting is somewhat uneven.

BALLETS OF LATIN AMERICA

ON April 13, Joaquin Pérez Fernandez presented a new programme of songs and dances at the Théâtre Marigny. Once again the qualities which earned him such success in 1951 appeared unchanged: a real understanding of the theatre, and a skilful transposition of folklore, its rhythms and its costumes. Joaquin Pérez Fernandez brings to his personal gifts as performer talent as an actor and an effective sense of stylisation. Within the limits of the technique he uses, he has managed to compose real scenes full of charm and colour vividly evoking the various countries of South America.

Sets and costumes are tastefully chosen; the music, pleasing and directly inspired by folklore, is well arranged by Bravilio Martins de Souza.

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The programme opens with an evocation of the Saturday Fair at Cuzco, Peru. Then Aria Sanlucar plays the part of Senora Monica Pérez, a coquette from Caracas, Venezuela, who is in difficulties with her four suitors, while Pilar Llorenz appears in *En la emramada*, a Chilean harvest festival. A rural Argentine scene brings on the gatos, cielitos, and the virile *Malambo* which gives Salvador Crespo the opportunity to shine. The whole company then conjures up the port of Tabasco in Mexico and the obstinate hammering of the *Cana Bravà*.

A few rapid scenes are devoted to Spain from Salamanca to the Asturias, and special mention must be made of a young boy's dance of Lagartera, still performed by Fernandez who, as before, scores his finest success in the Mexican dance of *The Two Brothers*. Surrounded by the entire company, he builds up a *crescendo* of excitement in *Les Petites Danses de la Terre* and in *Sortilèges de Panama*.

The evening ends with the sound of the frenzied tomtoms of the *cumbia*, in a whirl of embroidered linen skirts and foaming lace.

NEWS IN BRIEF

AT the Institut Chorégraphique on March 29, Jean-Louis Barrault spoke on "Problems of Gesture in the Theatre." With admirable clarity he analysed the body and its different means of expressing emotion, from breathing to the gesture proper. After emphasising the narrow limits of exclusively spoken drama, he observed the importance of the connection between speech and movement, giving several characteristic examples, and making references to Charlie Chaplin and to the Chinese National Theatre.

CLAUDE BESSY has just been nominated a *danseuse étoile* of the Paris Opéra Ballet. Jaqueline Rayet has been promoted from *grand sujet* to *première danseuse*.

Christiane Vaussard and Claude Bessy were the principal dancers in the ballet in *Faust*, when this was given in a new production with sets and costumes by Wakhevitch.

MAURICE BÉJART has recently created at Metz a new ballet to *musique concrète*. This work, *Haut Voltage*, was interpreted by Milorad Miskovitch and Hélène Trailine, against a set by Abel Rilliard.

THE Ballet Company of Moscow's Lyric Theatre, numbering 200 artists, is to give 30 performances at the Châtelet Theatre between June 11 and July 11.

ROLAND PETIT'S Ballets de Paris has had a triumph in Vienna, with *Le Loup*, *Deuil en 24 Heures*, and *Carmen*.

ON May 3, Marcel Marceau presented a new programme at the Théâtre de l'Ambigu. He gave a several new mimodramas: *Quatorze Juillet*, *Le Mont de Piété*, and *Le Loup de Chan Fang*, this last being inspired by a Chinese story of the twelfth century.

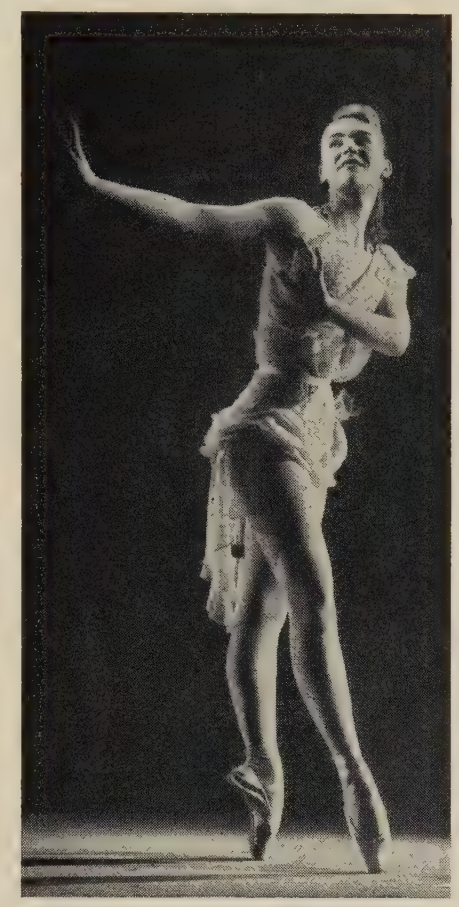
Marie-Françoise Christout

AMERICA

BALLET THEATRE IN NEW YORK

BALLET Theatre's three-week season at the Metropolitan Opera House saw the premieres of Antony Tudor's *Offenbach in the Underworld* and Agnes de Mille's *Rib of Eve* (reviewed in full next month), as well as revivals of Tudor's *Undertow* and *Dim Lustre*, and Agnes de Mille's *Tally-Ho*. Headed by Nora Kaye, Erik Bruhn, Rosella Hightower, Hugh Laing and John Kriza and with other featured artists—Lupe Serrano, Ruth Ann Koesun, Sonia Aroya, Scott Douglas, Eric Braun and Harold Lang—this company has made its strongest impact by some particular performances rather than for either of its two premieres or three revivals.

As one who remembers vividly the first performance of Ballet Theatre at the City Centre Theatre in 1940, it was again rewarding to see an American company open its season with such a variety of ballets as Balanchine's *Theme and Variations*, Tudor's *Pillar of Fire*, Herbert Ross' *Caprichos* and Lichine's *Graduation Ball*. Back firmly once more on home ground, Nora Kaye gave a magnificent performance in *Pillar of Fire*, admirably supported by Hugh Laing, and Erik Bruhn danced the male variation in *Theme and Variations* as expertly as it has ever been given. Rosella Hightower, making her New York debut in the same ballet, after several years abroad, was in considerably better form than when seen with



NEW STAR: Claude Bessy who has recently been promoted from première danseuse *to* danseuse étoile *at the Paris Opéra. Photo: Lido*

the company in Brooklyn last January at the outset of their cross-country tour. Since then her French mannerisms have disappeared and her own natural warmth and flowing lyricism have been increasingly more apparent.

Dancing the leads in all the classic ballets, Erik Bruhn has had the greatest New York triumphs of his career during this recent season. For him technique appears to be no problem at all, and his performances have been impeccable and brilliant throughout the season. His phrasing and musicality appear flawless, and together with the genuineness of his characterisations fulfil everything that we expect of a *premier danseur*. It would be difficult, as a matter of fact, to name another classical male dancer of the last decade who has equalled the impact Bruhn has made on the New York critical press and public. This was made evident a year ago in his historic matinee performance in *Giselle* opposite Markova, and it has been apparent in his role of Albrecht this season, as danced opposite both Rosella Hightower and Nora Kaye, as well as in *Les Sylphides*, *Swan Lake*, the *Black Swan Pas de Deux*, *The Nutcracker* and *Theme and Variations*.

Nora Kaye has had similar triumphs in the Tudor and de Mille dramatic ballets, as well as giving the finest classical performances of her career in *Giselle* and the one-act *Swan Lake*, as well as *Princess Aurora* and the *Black Swan Pas de Deux*. This season she has more than justified her reputation as America's greatest dramatic ballerina. Kaye has given ample evidence of her right to this title but even more importantly, perhaps, she has established herself as a classical dancer of note, even with those who have continuously maintained that her forte was dramatic ballets.

As the season progressed, Rosella Hightower was dancing at the top of her form, especially in the second act of *Giselle*, in the *Black Swan Pas de Deux*, and in the role of Medusa in Tudor's *Undertow*. Hugh Laing, as always, has been both compelling and irreplaceable in *Undertow*, *Lilac Garden*, *Dim Lustre*, *Pillar of Fire* and *Tally-Ho*. Noteworthy, too, have been Scott Douglas' performances in *Offenbach in the Underworld*, in the *Blue Bird Pas de Deux*, and in *Swan Lake*.

During the season there have been an Antony Tudor Night and an Agnes de Mille Night when the entire programme was devoted to works of each of these distinguished choreographers. Since Tudor celebrates his twenty-fifth year as a choreographer this year, the evening of ballets by this modern master seemed particularly in order. Certainly his works are among the most durable of the company's repertory and, being as well rehearsed and performed as they have been, were among the major riches of the season. Indeed, America and Ballet Theatre, in particular, have been most fortunate in having this great choreographer in our country during the past sixteen years.

BALLET THEATRE WORKSHOP

SCHEDULED for early May, too late for review in this issue, the Ballet Theatre Workshop mounted a programme of four ballets at the Phoenix Theatre. These were *Workout*, choreographed by Robert Joffrey to music by Robert McBride; *Continuum* by Harry Asmus to Mozart music; *Allegory in Jazz*, choreographed by Job Sanders to music by Jack Montrose; and a suite of dances based on Giradoux' *The Enchanted*, choreographed by Katherine Litz to a new score by Richard Banks. The performing company consisted of professional students of the Ballet Theatre School with guest artists Lupe Serrano, Erik Bruhn, Ruth Ann Koesun and Sonia Arova, all of Ballet Theatre, as well as Gemze de Lappe, James Mitchell and Michael Maule.

DANISH BALLET'S N.Y. ENGAGEMENT

THE Royal Danish Ballet, which makes a seven-week tour of America and Canada next autumn, makes its American debut at the Metropolitan Opera House on September 16. This two-week season will include a repertoire of 11 ballets: Bournonville's *La Sylphide*, *Napoli* and *Far From Denmark*; Ashton's *Romeo and Juliet*; Galeotti's *The Whims of Cupid and the Ballet Master*, as well as Fokine's *Chopiniana* and *Petrushka*, Balanchine's *La Somnambula*, Lichine's *Graduation Ball*, as well as *Dream Pictures* and *Coppelia*.

Headed by leading dancers Mona Vangsaa, Kirsten Ralov, Margarethe Schanne, Inge Sand, Borge Ralov, Niels Bjorn Larsen, Frank Schaufuss, Svend Erik Jensen, Stanley Williams, Fredbjorn Bjornson and Henning Kronstam, the company will include solists and the complete *corps de ballet*.

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its summer season, the first Eastern appearances of the San Francisco Ballet. Aside from the three-week engagement of this major West Coast company, Ted Shawn announces that the following stars and dance groups will be appearing at this dance centre during July and August: Mia Slavenska, Melissa Hayden, Sonia Arova and Job Sanders, Nina Novak and Leon Danilian, the Dokoudovsky-Stroganova Ballet, Ruth St. Denis, David Adams and Lois Smith, as well as Myra Kinch, Carola Goya, Geoffrey Holder and Carmen de Lavallade, Anna Sokolow and Lotte Gosler.

DANCE AND DANCERS ACROSS AMERICA

HANYA HOLM is in Colorado where she is co-director of *Ballad of Baby Doe*, the new Douglas Moore-John Latouche folk opera which is to be premiered by the Central City Opera Association.

TODD BOLENDER, of the New York City Ballet, is choreographing the dances for the Civic Light Opera's production of *Rosalinda* that is to have an eight-week engagement in San Francisco and Los Angeles. Roland Vasquez, Jillana and John Mandia will appear in this before going to Europe with the New York City Ballet.

MARIA TALLCHIEF and André Eglevsky will dance in Boston, at the Lewisohn Stadium in New York, as well as with the Buffalo Philharmonic and the Cleveland Symphony. In addition, they will be featured in a two-week presentation of *The Student Prince* in Los Angeles.

PAUL DRAPER is to dance at the Stratford, Ontario, Festival in July.

NORA KAYE and Hugh Laing, accompanied by Antony Tudor, visit Japan this month to take part in the tenth anniversary celebration of the Komaki Ballet Company. Kaye and Laing are dancing in Tokyo, Osaka and Nagoya.

Arthur Todd

A DANE IN AMERICA: Erik Bruhn and Lupe Serrano in the Nutcracker pas de deux *with Ballet Theatre.*

Bruhn has now left the Royal Danish Ballet to become a permanent member of Ballet Theatre. He is taking over all the roles originally danced by Igor Youskevitch. Bruhn will, however, appear with the Danish Ballet during their annual festival at the Royal Theatre in Copenhagen which takes place from May 18 *to* 31.

Photo: Maurice Seymour

EIRE

XIMENEZ-VARGAS BALLET ESPANOL

DUBLIN is a friendly, welcoming city and what is more its inhabitants like and understand the dance, while its critics have perception that put their colleagues in some of the world's larger cities to shame. Both the critics and the audience took kindly to the Ximenez-Vargas Ballet Español when it opened its first season there on March 31.

This group of four dancers, a singer and a pianist is headed by its founders, Roberto Ximenez and Manolo Vargas. Both were for many years principal male dancers in the Ballet Español of Pilar Lopez. From that great personality of the Spanish dance, they have acquired a great deal. Their whole presentation is in excellent taste and, like Pilar Lopez, they never resort to noise and untidiness which is so often considered to be essential to Spanish dancing by those ignorant enough not to know better. There is not the slightest doubt that Pilar Lopez leaves her mark on all those fortunate enough to have worked with her.

This small group gave a balanced and well-varied programme, though I could not help wishing that there were not more flamenco numbers in the earlier part of the programme I saw. Several of the dances had already been given by these dancers when they were with Pilar Lopez—the delightful *pas de trois*, *Munecos Mexicanos*, *Chivato* by Vargas and Ximenez's *Zapateado*.

I particularly liked the *Panederos Antiguos* for Vargas and Ana Mercedes and the *Boleros del Burrero* for all four, including Victoria Salcedo which ended the first half. The programme finished with a *Cuadro Flamenco—Tientos*, a Farruca for Ximenez and Vargas, and the whole group in *Alegrias*. It was very lively, well arranged and all done with great style.

The two girls make good foils for the male dancers even if at the moment they need a bit more theatrical punch. This will no doubt come with experience. Ana Mercedes was outstanding in Albeniz's *Leyenda* and Victoria Salcedo had a sultry beauty which reminded one of Toumanova. The programme was punctuated by a very good singer, Fina Vivo, who sang an exciting *Serranas*.

For the major capitals of the world, the group will obviously have to be enlarged, but for smaller theatres this is certainly one of the best of these smaller Spanish groups that I have seen.

P.W.

DENMARK

ROYAL DANISH BALLET

THE Danish Ballet Festival is taking place at the Royal Theatre, Copenhagen, from May 18 to 31. The revival of Bournonville's *Far from Denmark* is the principal novelty of the festival. This work has not been seen for many years.

Last December, Henning Kronstam was appointed solodancer. His first success was as The Poet in Balanchine's *Night Shadow*; he later created the role of Romeo in Ashton's *Romeo and Juliet* for which he received his greatest and most deserved praise. At the age of 21 he has already proved to be yet another important male dancer to come from the Royal Theatre.

A new post has been created at the Royal Theatre: that of vice theatre chief. Henning Rohde, from the Danish Ministry of Education, who for several years did outstanding work as head of the drama department of the Danish Radio, has been appointed. It is anticipated that one day he will be chief of the theatre. He has already been highly praised by the press and it is expected that the ballet will, as a result, again flourish.

An official statement was put out by the Royal Theatre on April 3 to the effect that Niels Bjorn Larsen would resign as Ballet Master on July 1. For the past two years he has been partly responsible for the productions at the Pantomime Theatre in Tivoli. Now he is to take charge of this theatre. Larsen had to make the choice as the Royal Theatre did not think that he could possibly keep both positions. However, he will continue as a soloist with his present company.

Frank Shaufuss has been appointed Ballet Master for a year as from July 1. He is 33 years old and married to solodancer, Mona Vangsaa. As well as dancing many leading roles in Denmark, he has also appeared with Roland Petit's Ballet de Paris and the de Cuevas Grand Ballet. He will be remembered in England when he appeared with Metropolitan Ballet.

In a broadcast he stated that the theatre should now cease to bring in foreign choreographers but will concentrate on developing a new generation of Danish choreographers. The Bournonville school, recently neglected, is to resume its place with the help of Hans Brenaa, who will also assist Shaufuss in preserving the old ballets.

Bent Schonberg

MODERN DANCE CHOREOGRAPHY IN AMERICA

by David Vaughan

from page 29

THE other great, not to say matriarchal, figure in the American modern dance is Doris Humphrey. Someone once heard a young dance student say to another, as Charles Weidman walked by, "That's Humphrey Weidman," and Humphrey's name is usually hyphenated with another's. The days of the Humphrey-Weidman company were before my time, nor have I seen any of the revivals of her works from this period that she has recently mounted on the Juilliard School Dance Com-

pany, notably *With My Red Fires* and *The Life of the Bee*. Nowadays her name is linked with that of José Limon, of whose company she is artistic director and chief choreographer.

Strangely enough, although she is presumably the innovator and he the pupil, I find Limon's dances more satisfying than those I have seen of Humphrey's. Her *Lament for Ignacio Sanchez Meijas*, perhaps the most famous dance in Limon's repertoire, derives most of its power from his extraordinary impersonation of the dead bullfighter: the choreography relies on rather rudimentary symbols (Death ensnares him in a length of green rope) and to my mind the extracts from Lorca's poem are not well integrated. On the other hand Limon's *The Moor's Pavane*, to some wonderful music of Purcell, is a dance that could make its effect without its original interpreters. It is the basic conflict of *Othello* concentrated into a series of formal dances for Othello, Desdemona, Iago, and Emilia—a most striking conception.

Of other dances by Humphrey that I have seen, I was mildly irritated by *Night Spell*, which is in a kind of near-ballet style; *Ruins and Visions*, on a scenario from Stephen Spender, qualifies for a choreographic Department of Utter Confusion; *Ritmo Jondo* is almost musical comedy Spanish. Among Limon's works I remember with pleasure the large-scale group dance on a Mexican folk theme, *El Grito*, and some sections of *Ode*, a dance about dancing. He has also choreographed two dances on Biblical themes: *The Exiles* (the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise) and *The Visitation* (a misnomer—the dance is about the Annunciation). Both of these strike me as excellent dance subjects, yet only *The Exiles* really comes off—it is, in fact, very moving. In *The Visitation* there is rather too much manipulation of a board on which Mary lies while Joseph lifts it, etcetera—a very contrived and meaningless business.

For the most part Limon chooses themes which are very suitable for choreographic treatment (there is a third Biblical dance that I have not seen, *The Traitor*), and he makes a rather more intelligent choice of music than is usual among modern choreographers. *The Exiles*, for instance, is danced to some difficult but highly appropriate music of Schönberg.

More Moderns

AFTER Graham, Humphrey, and Limon, I suppose the next most influential figure is Hanya Holm. Unfortunately none of her serious works has been performed during the last five years in New York—as opposed to her expert Broadway choreography, familiar to English audiences from *Kiss Me, Kate*. Another dancer whose serious work I have not seen is Valerie Bettis. Her choreographic version of *A Streetcar Named Desire* for Mia Slavenska could hardly be taken seriously.

Anna Sokolow, who was for some time a member of Graham's company and subsequently a frequent solo recitalist, has recently produced some dances that are very ambitious in both scale and scope. Her *Lyric Suite* (Alban Berg), though it suffered from some over-emphatic performances, had several very beautiful and disturbing moments. *Rooms* (to a jazz score) I found beautiful and disturbing nearly all the way through. It is a dance about people's loneliness, their secret lives, the anguish of cities. Not all the dances come off: some are overlong and repetitive, but *The Wild One* solo danced by Jack Moore and those of the Negro (originally danced by Donald McKayle) and the young girl (Judith Coy) are very impressive achievements. Sokolow has an individual and tragic vision of the human condition (as opposed to the more usual obsession with her own psychological state) and she expresses it with intensity. Her dances may sometimes be boring in that they make their statement and then make it again and again, but she has a kind of profound theatrical intuition and makes up in vitality what she sometimes lacks in taste. She has also made some very successful comic works, I believe, and lyrical dance, *Primavera* (to the Cimarosa-Benjamin oboe concerto) that proved to be a little too subtle for the Juilliard students for whom it was commissioned.

Many other dancers have emerged from the Graham company to produce large-scale works of their own. In some cases, such as Nina Fonaroff, Pearl Lang, May O'Donnell, and John Butler, one may feel that these are too boring, too derivative, too pretentious, or too slick. There are many dancers, too, who have produced successful solos and duets but who wisely do not attempt works on a larger scale—or make the attempt and fail. Pearl Lang's solos, for example, are quite beautiful. So are Natanya Neumann's, and Linda Margolies and Stuart Hodes have made some interesting small-scale dances, such as the former's *Curley's Wife* (an episode from *Of Mice and Men*).

One of the few really memorable group works I saw was Donald McKayle's *Games*, a most moving work based on the lives of children in Harlem, seen through their street games (sung most affectingly by McKayle himself and the enchanting Shawneequa Baker). None of his subsequent works has come up to this level.

In a further article I hope to discuss the work of certain isolated yet important figures, and of some other choreographers who have not only broken away from Graham's or Humphrey's companies but have also repudiated the aesthetic and philosophical premises on which their art is based.

Ballet Dates

SADLER'S WELLS BALLET
at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden

May
19 (M) *Coppelia* (Lane, Grant)
21 *Le Lac des Cygnes* (Jackson, Somes)
23 *Giselle* (Nerina, Rassine), *The Three-Cornered Hat*
26 *Le Lac des Cygnes* (Fonteyn, Somes)
29 *Le Lac des Cygnes* (Elvin, Blair)

June
1 *Scènes de Ballet, Noctambules, The Firebird*
5 *Les Sylphides, Birthday Offering, Mam'zelle Angot*
7 *Scènes de Ballet, Noctambules, The Firebird*
9 (M) *Le Lac des Cygnes* (Fifield, Blair)
9 (E) *Le Lac des Cygnes* (Fonteyn, Somes)
13 *Le Lac des Cygnes* (Fonteyn, Somes)
15 *Le Lac des Cygnes* (Nerina, Rassine)
21 *The Sleeping Beauty* (Grey, Chatfield)
22 *The Sleeping Beauty* (Beriosova, Somes)
23 (M) *The Sleeping Beauty* (Nerina, Rassine)
23 (E) *The Sleeping Beauty* (Elvin, Blair)

Evenings 7.30 p.m. Saturday Matinee 2 p.m.
End of season

SADLER'S WELLS THEATRE BALLET

May
14 Theatre Royal, Hanley
21 New Theatre, Oxford

Programme for Sadler's Wells Season
May
29 *Blood Wedding, Blue Bird pas de deux, Somnambulism* (London premiere), *Pineapple Poll*
30 *Le Lac des Cygnes Act 2, House of Birds, Les Patineurs*
31 *Tke Rake's Progress, Giselle pas de deux, Somnambulism, Pineapple Poll*

June
1 *Coppelia* (New production)
2 (M) *Coppelia*
2 (E) *Coppelia*
4 *Le Lac des Cygnes Act 2, Blue Bird pas de deux, Somnambulism, The Rake's Progress*
5 *Le Lac des Cygnes Act 2, Giselle pas de deux, Somnambulism, Blood Wedding*
6 *Les Patineurs, The Rake's Progress, Pineapple Poll*
7 *House of Birds*, World premiere of Macmillan's *Solitaire, Somnambulism, Danses Concertantes*
8 *House of Birds, Somnambulism, Solitaire, Danses Concertantes*
9 (M) *Le Lac des Cygnes Act 2, Solitaire, Café des Sports*
9 (E) *Pineapple Poll, House of Birds, Café des Sports*
11 *Les Patineurs, Harlequin in April, Solitaire*
12 *Les Patineurs, House of Birds, Solitaire*
13 (M) *Coppelia*
13 (E) *Coppelia*
14 *Blood Wedding, Saudades* (London Premiere), *Café des Sports*
15 *Danses Concertantes, Blood Wedding, Pineapple Poll*
16 (M) *Coppelia*
16 (E) *Saudades, Harlequin in April, Solitaire*

Evenings 7 p.m. Saturday Matinee 2.30 p.m.

BALLET RAMBERT

May
14 Coliseum, Harrow
21 Marlowe Theatre, Canterbury

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May
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24-30 Zurich
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29-July 5 Holland Festival (Amsterdam, The Hague)
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DANISH BALLET FESTIVAL
From May 17-31 at the Royal Theatre, Copenhagen

May
18 *Chopiniana, Petrouchka, Prince Igor*
22 *La Sylphide, Graduation Ball*
23 *Romeo and Juliet*
25 *Pas de Quatre, Nutcracker Pas de Deux, Coppelia*
26 *La Somnambula, Fjernt Fra Danmark* (Far From Denmark)
27 *Giselle, Le Beau Danube*
28 *Chopiniana, Petrouchka, Prince Igor*
29 *Romeo and Juliet*
30 *La Somnambula, Fjert Fra Danmark*
31 *Drommebilleder* (Dream Pictures), *Napoli*

STOCKHOLM BALLET FESTIVAL

June 3-13. At the Royal Opera House, Stockholm, and at Drottningholm.
4 *Rite of Spring, Three-Cornered Hat, Gaité Parisienne*
8 *Rite of Spring, Three-Cornered Hat, Gaité Parisienne*
9 Gala—*Rite of Spring*, 2 acts of opera *Don Carlos*
11 *Giselle, Medea*
13 *Rite of Spring, Three-Cornered Hat, Gaité Parisienne*
14 Gala at Drottingholm: 18th century rococo ballet, Pergolesi opera.

Ballet Correspondents

(Abbreviations: b.c.—ballet correspondence; m.—male; f.—female; m.a.—my age; o.i.—other interests; l.s.—languages; p.r.—photograph requested).

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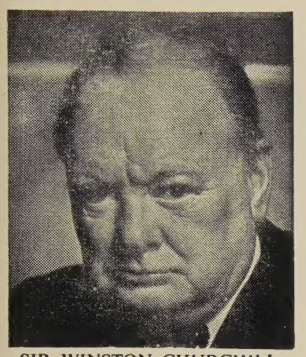

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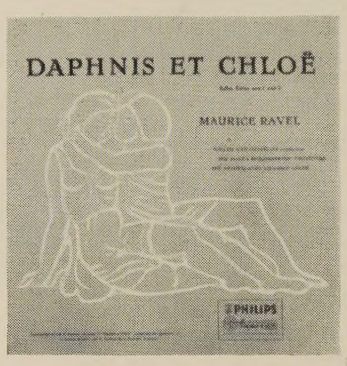

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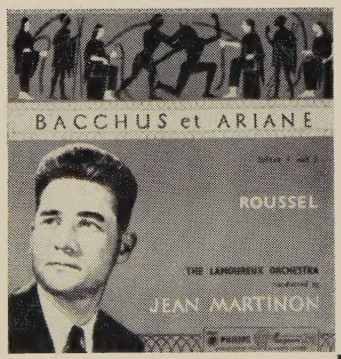

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